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ABSTRACT

This manual and accompanying implementation handbook provide a framework for Saskatchewan community schools seeking to create the comprehensive, preventive, and empowering learning programs needed by Indian, Metis, and at-risk children. The introduction defines community schools and summarizes elements of the community schools best practices framework. Subsequent chapters address the issues and challenges in adopting a comprehensive approach; policy, vision, goals, principles, and strategies for community schools; the community school framework encompassing the student, program components, school effectiveness, and the community; roles and responsibilities of the community school council, the coordinator, teacher associates, the principal, teachers, support staff, students, community agencies, volunteers, government agencies, and Saskatchewan Education; and evaluation and accountability approaches. Six appendixes give guidelines for developing the community school plan, an evaluation guide for community schools, the continuum of parent and community involvement and partnerships, the community development process, a glossary of terms, and 57 references. The accompanying handbook provides step-by-step assistance in the implementation process. Building on the material in the manual, it gives outlines for meetings and workshops; duties of council members; decision-making strategies; communication skills and practices; the basics of holding meetings; steps in developing, implementing, and evaluating the community school plan; and reporting and support suggestions. Appendixes include a summary; sample meeting agendas, minutes, and evaluation; a code of ethics; and 16 references. (SAS)

Saskatchewan
Education

ED 425 879

Building Communities of Hope

Best Practices for Meeting the Learning Needs of At-Risk and Indian and Métis Students

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Community Schools Policy and Conceptual Framework

RC 021676

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Planning and Evaluation Branch
Saskatchewan Education
March, 1996

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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

Over the past fifteen years, Saskatchewan's Community Schools have gained a wealth of experience as pioneers in educational innovation for Indian and Métis students and for students living in poverty – at risk. Today, the growing numbers of at risk children in the province, as well as the increasing number of Indian and Métis students are generating a renewed interest in the responsive and comprehensive educational program found in Community Schools.

The framework for Community Schools described in this manual provides direction for educators, families and communities to work together to create the comprehensive, preventive, and empowering learning program required by growing numbers of children. It puts forward a vision where the learning program is supported by the active involvement of parents, community partnerships, integrated health, education, social and justice services, and community development activities. Taken together, these "best practices" enable students to learn, teachers to focus on creating an innovative, relevant and challenging learning program, and parents and the community to contribute both to the school and to their own development.

I am strongly committed to the Community Schools approach to education and ask for your help in implementing it. I invite educators, boards of education, families and community members to work with us in making the vision in this manual a reality. By working together, building on the strengths of communities and sharing resources we can ensure opportunity, learning, and hope for all Saskatchewan's children.

Pat Atkinson

Pat Atkinson, Minister
Saskatchewan Education

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Building Communities of Hope: Best Practices for Meeting the Learning Needs of At Risk and Indian and Métis Students was developed with the ideas and commitment of a number of dedicated people in schools, school divisions, and community organizations. Appreciation is sincerely extended to all those involved, including:

- Saskatchewan Community Schools Association
- Prince Albert Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 6
- Prince Albert School Division No. 3
- Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 81
- Regina School Division No. 4
- St. Paul's Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 20
- Saskatoon School Division No. 13
- the Indian and Métis Education Advisory Committee (IMEAC)
- the Steering Committee for Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Children
- the Minister's Working Committee on Integrated School-Linked Services
- Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation

This policy and conceptual framework is based on the strengths and experience of the original seventeen schools in the Community Schools Program (1980). We are indebted to the leadership of the Community Schools, boards of education, staffs, parents and communities involved. Through innovation and partnerships they have pioneered many of the best practices identified in this manual. In addition, this document draws extensively on the literature from the field. References are available in Appendix F.

Note:

The term **"at risk"** is used throughout this manual as a common frame of reference to help educators, human service providers and policy makers to focus their efforts in order to meet more effectively the needs of a specific group of people. It is intended to focus supports and services on the needs of a growing number of Saskatchewan children and families who, for social and economic reasons, face barriers to success in school and life.

In this manual, the term **"parent"** is used to refer to a child's significant care-giver. This may include a child's mother, father, grandparent, aunt, uncle, sister, brother, foster parent or other guardian.

The role and contributions of the **"school"** are discussed throughout this manual. It is recognized that the school is made up of a number of people including teachers, principal, support staff, itinerant professionals, parent and community volunteers and human service staff from partner agencies.

You are welcome to copy and distribute this manual.

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I

INTRODUCTION: BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF HOPE

Today in Saskatchewan, educators are facing immense challenges as they work to meet the learning needs of their students. Growing rates of child and family poverty, increasing family and community instability, and changing family structures are having a profound impact on the needs of students and on the expectations placed on teachers and other school staff. Schools are being asked to carry out many roles in the lives of children that were previously the responsibility of the family or the community.

Students have difficulty learning when they are hungry, emotionally distressed, lack stability and safety in their families and communities, are discriminated against, or when other primary needs are not being met. To remove these barriers to their learning, growing numbers of students require a diverse range of social, health, cultural, justice and other services. As well, if the learning program is to succeed, active and committed parents and stable contributing communities are critical. This understanding of what is needed for at risk students to succeed in school is challenging us to rethink the role of schools, how educational and other services are delivered for children and families, and who must be involved in the process.

The original Community Schools Program was implemented in 1980 to address urban Aboriginal poverty. Since that time, these schools have provided Indian and Métis students with a learning environment and program that is culturally affirming and that respects and reflects their histories, experiences, and educational needs. As well, they have provided innovative, caring and effective responses to the learning needs of students living in poverty in the inner cities of Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert.

Community Schools are founded upon a tradition of community education, which in turn has its roots in community development. Community Schools build strong relationships with their community members and organizations and work closely with families. These close ties serve to improve educational opportunities and programs and to strengthen the communities in which the schools are located. Community Schools recognize that the difficulties children experience in school are often the result of circumstances that originate in the home or the community. Their programs take into account the cultural and socio-economic life experiences of the students and provide the wide range of supports needed for children to learn.

BEST PRACTICES FOR AT RISK AND INDIAN AND MÉTIS STUDENTS

Building Communities of Hope: Best Practices for Meeting the Learning Needs of At Risk and Indian and Métis Students builds on the innovations and successes of the original Community Schools Program to provide the policy, vision, principles and program direction for a revitalized and strengthened model for schools and the delivery of human services. The Community School framework described in this document incorporates a number of best practices that have proven to be highly effective in the education of at risk and Indian and Métis students. Taken together, this comprehensive approach has the potential to create the holistic, preventive, caring and empowering educational environment required by these students and their families.

Community Schools serve as flagships for educational innovation for at risk and Indian and Métis students by:

- providing the framework and elements for a **broadened definition of the role of schools** that brings together and **integrates the comprehensive range of supports** and programs that these students need in order to learn;
- creating a learning program and environment that is culturally affirming and that respects and reflects the experiences and realities of students' lives;
- emphasizing strengthened **partnerships** among schools, parents, community members and Indian and Métis groups in education planning and service delivery. The aim is to create a **shared sense of responsibility** for the education and well-being of children and to develop **opportunities for Indian and Métis peoples to have greater participation in decision-making** in public education;
- emphasizing **community development** and **community empowerment**, recognizing that the success of the learning program is largely determined by factors outside the school which affect the student, and that the school has a role to play in addressing those external factors;
- providing a **support role to neighbouring schools**, and **leadership in the province** in educational innovation for Indian, Métis and at risk students; and
- providing a mechanism for ongoing **planning and evaluation** within the school which will ensure the **continuous renewal and maximum effectiveness** of programs.

WORKING TOGETHER TO BUILD COMMUNITIES OF HOPE

The vision, philosophy and program elements outlined in this manual provide a picture of what schools can be and how human services can be delivered more effectively so that at risk and Indian and Métis students are able to succeed in school – a framework for creating learning communities of hope. **The achievement of this vision requires the commitment, support and shared resources of boards of education, educators, parents, community members, human service agencies, and the provincial government.**

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS BEST PRACTICES FRAMEWORK: AT A GLANCE

What's New?

Increased emphasis on:

- Comprehensive best practices framework;
- Partnerships, shared ownership and community development;
- Integrated services;
- Strengthened accountability.

Vision:

Saskatchewan Community Schools are centres of learning and hope for their communities. They incorporate a comprehensive range of best educational practices for meeting the diverse learning needs of at risk and Indian and Métis students. They provide a responsive, inclusive, culturally affirming and academically challenging learning program and environment and are effective in addressing the challenges of the communities they serve. As hubs for a network of community organizations and activities, they use collaborative approaches to foster the development and well-being of the entire community.

Issues and Challenges:

- Meeting the learning needs of growing numbers of students at risk;
- Responding to the education needs of Indian and Métis students;
- Establishing shared decision-making opportunities for Indian and Métis Peoples; and,
- Enhancing parent and community involvement and encouraging shared responsibility

Goals:

- Student learning and success;
- A high quality education program;
- Shared responsibility;
- Enhanced participation in and management of public education by Indian and Métis peoples;
- Comprehensive, responsive services;
- Community empowerment;
- Equity and cultural harmony; and
- Leadership in educational innovation.

Principles:

- Educational excellence;
- Cooperation and openness;
- Equity and respect for diversity;
- Preventive and comprehensive approaches;
- Empowerment; and
- Accountability.

Strategies:

- Development of a relevant, responsive learning program;
- Collaboration and partnerships;
- Integrated planning and service delivery;
- Community development;
- Leadership development and capacity-building;
- School staff selection and development;
- A process of planning, evaluation and renewal; and
- Effective use of resources.

Elements of the Community School Plan:

- The Learning Program
- Parent and Community Involvement
- Integrated Services
- Community Development
- School Effectiveness
- Staff Team
- School Culture and Climate
- Process for Ongoing Renewal
- Community School Council

II

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES: WHY ADOPT A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH?

There are a number of reasons to strengthen and promote Community Schools in Saskatchewan. These include:

1. MEETING THE LEARNING NEEDS OF GROWING NUMBERS OF STUDENTS AT RISK: INCORPORATING BEST PRACTICES

Growing numbers of Saskatchewan students are coming to school with complex social, emotional, health and developmental problems that are barriers to their learning. As many as 40% of students are experiencing problems such as poverty, family breakdown, violence and abuse, teen pregnancy, and substance abuse (Government of Saskatchewan, 1993; Valpy, 1993). These problems impact on their educational experience and place them "at risk", compromising their opportunities for success in school and later in life.

Although it is possible to discuss problems such as drug abuse, homelessness, and depression among children and youth as separate issues, it should be recognized that these problems are often interconnected and that many children suffer from more than one at the same time. For example, a child who is abused or neglected at home or has lived in a series of unsuccessful foster care placements may drop out of school and run away to live on the streets. The same child may be drawn to experiment with illegal drugs, become depressed, and attempt suicide. The factors that put children at risk tend to be cumulative. (Advisory Committee on Children's Service, 1990).

- Between 1989 and 1993, the number of children in Canada living in poverty increased by 51.4% to 1,447,000 children (Freeman, 1994)
- Saskatchewan has the second highest rate of child poverty in Canada (23%). (The National Council of Welfare, Minister of Supply and Services Canada, "Poverty Profile 1993", Spring, 1995).
- *Saskatchewan 2000*, a demographic projection for the province into the twenty-first century, anticipates an increase in the rate of divorce, number of one-parent households, number of teen-age mothers, family violence, drug and alcohol addiction, and poverty – all factors that place children at risk. (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association Research Centre, 1991).

The solutions to the problems many students face require a range of services and supports that cut across the boundaries of schools, human service agencies, and different departments of government. Solutions also include the involvement of parents and the development of communities to create supportive, safe and stable environments out of school.

Research has demonstrated that taken together the **comprehensive range of supports and best practices** provided in this framework are the most effective means of addressing the complex needs of at risk students and removing barriers to their learning. **Any one of these elements in isolation or a piecemeal approach has limited chance of success.**

The comprehensive range of best practices include:

- a high quality, culturally affirming learning program;
- a comprehensive range of student supports and integrated services, and extra curricular programs provided within the school or linked to it;
- full involvement and partnership with parents and community members;
- a dynamic mechanism for program planning, evaluation, and renewal within the school;
- the development of a safe, caring and respectful school culture and climate; and
- heightened emphasis on the responsibility of the school to develop and strengthen its community.

2. Responding to the Education Needs of Indian and Métis Students

As the numbers of Indian and Métis students in the public education system continue to grow, efforts to provide responsive, culturally affirming, and academically challenging programs that strengthen their opportunities to succeed become even more important. Community Schools employ Indian and Métis teachers and teacher associates whenever possible. They provide curriculum, learning materials and a learning environment that affirms the identity, culture and values of Indian and Métis peoples.

- By the year 2011, approximately one-third of the school population will be of Aboriginal ancestry (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, 1991).
- Although the number of school-aged children in the general population will decline in the years ahead, the number of Aboriginal children will almost double (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, 1991).

3. Enhancing Involvement of Indian and Métis Peoples

Within Saskatchewan's public education system, opportunities are needed for Indian and Métis peoples to take a greater role in the management of their children's education. Community School Councils provide a ready opportunity to strengthen Indian and Métis involvement and to negotiate shared decision-making with boards of education.

4. Enhancing Parent and Community Involvement and Encouraging Shared Responsibility

Many parents and community organizations are calling for a stronger voice in education planning and decision-making. At the same time, schools are recognizing the necessity and advantages of greater parent and community involvement in strengthening their programs and achieving student success. Community Schools encourage parent, community and business partnerships which provide a broader range of supports, programs and services and foster shared responsibility for the well-being and success of students.

For students at risk, parent involvement in the learning process has been identified as the single most important determinant of success. Many schools face the challenge of involving parents who have traditionally not played an active role in the education of their children. An important focus in Community Schools is "capacity-building" which includes developing leadership skills and achieving full and meaningful participation of parents and community members.

III

POLICY, VISION, GOALS, PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Policy

It is the policy of Saskatchewan Education to actively promote and support the adoption by school boards of a comprehensive, preventive, culturally affirming and community-based approach to meeting the learning needs of at risk and Indian and Métis students. The renewed Community Schools model provides the framework for incorporating a holistic range of supports and approaches, proven to be effective in the education of these students.

Vision, Goals, Principles and Best Practices

The vision, goals, principles and best practices below provide a framework for creating a learning community of hope for at risk and Indian and Métis students. Within this framework each Community School will have its own unique characteristics based on the needs, priorities and resources of its community.

Vision

Saskatchewan Community Schools are centres of learning and hope for their communities. They incorporate a comprehensive range of best educational practices for meeting the diverse learning needs of at risk and Indian and Métis students. They provide a responsive, inclusive, culturally affirming and academically challenging learning program and environment and are effective in addressing the challenges of the communities they serve. As hubs for a network of community organizations and activities, they use collaborative approaches to foster the development and well-being of the entire community.

Goals:

The goals for Community Schools contribute to achieving the vision. They include:

1. **Student Learning and Success**
   All students have the opportunity and supports they require to achieve their potential and succeed in school and life.
2. **A High Quality Education Program**
   There is a high quality, culturally affirming and challenging education program that incorporates and enhances the components and initiatives of Core Curriculum.
3. **Shared Responsibility**
   School staff, parents, and the community share responsibility for the education and well-being of students. This is demonstrated by active parent and community involvement in education planning, problem solving and service delivery and by a shared understanding of educational and community issues and affairs.
4. **Comprehensive, Responsive Services**
   The school serves as the hub of a comprehensive, responsive, community-based system of education, health, social, justice and recreation services provided to meet the needs of the students and their families.
5. **Enhanced Participation in Public Education by Indian and Métis Peoples**
   Indian and Métis peoples actively participate in the planning and management of school programs.
6. **Community Empowerment**
   Communities surrounding the schools are stable, safe, supportive and healthy. School staff, parents and other community members are actively involved in improving the quality of life in the community.

7. **Equity and Cultural Harmony**
   The students, staff, parents and community members involved with the school respect one another, and there is equity, cultural understanding and harmony in the school and the community.
8. **Leadership in Educational Innovation**
   Community Schools are leaders in educational innovation for at risk and Indian and Métis students. They provide support and advice to other schools seeking to introduce the best practices outlined in this document.

Principles:

The principles that will guide all Community School activities include:

1. **Educational Excellence**
   Education programming and services are of the highest quality. They are responsive, culturally affirming, challenging and delivered in a safe and caring school environment and encourage all students to achieve their full potential.
2. **Cooperation and Openness**
   The school staff, parents, community members, and school council are mutually supportive partners who share responsibility for the education and well-being of children. Community Schools are centres of community, open and welcoming to students, family and community members where people of all ages can learn, become involved in planning school and community programs, events and projects; and take part in recreational, social and cultural activities.
3. **Equity: Respect for Diversity and Cultural Responsiveness**
   The cultural heritage, life experience, unique potential and capabilities of each child or adult are respected. All students have the opportunity to experience success and develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to contribute meaningfully to society. The principle goes beyond equality of opportunity where everyone is treated the same, to fostering a barrier-free environment where individuals benefit equally.
4. **Preventive and Comprehensive Approaches**
   Programs and services are designed to anticipate and offer supports to students before significant problems require major intervention. The needs of children and families are addressed holistically, recognizing the interconnected nature of the problems and their solutions. As well, the needs and well-being of the students are considered in the context of the many family and community relationships which nurture them and to which they are attached.
5. **Empowerment**
   Through leadership development and collaborative processes, Community Schools strengthen the capacity of students, parents, and communities to operate cooperatively and self-sufficiently, to determine their own needs, and to plan how they will meet those needs.
6. **Accountability**
   The Community School Council, principal, school staff, board of education, parents, community, participating agencies and provincial government are collectively responsible for assessing the effectiveness and success of the program in meeting its planned objectives.

Strategies:

The processes used by Community Schools to achieve their objectives include:

1. **Development of a Relevant, Responsive Learning Program**
   The principal and teachers, together with the teacher associates, community school coordinator, support staff and the Community School Council plan, implement and assess the learning program and educational approaches. The learning program and educational approaches incorporate all aspects of Core Curriculum including the Required Areas of Study, Common Essential Learnings, the Adaptive Dimension, locally determined options and a range of diverse educational supports.

2. **Collaboration and Partnerships**
The principal and school staff forge partnerships with parents, community members, Indian and Métis organizations, and human service agencies. Partners collaborate to define education and community issues and to share resources as they work toward and evaluate the attainment of shared goals.

3. **Integrated Planning and Service Delivery**
Community partnerships work to provide coordinated, integrated and comprehensive education, health, justice, recreation, and social services necessary to address the needs of at risk students. These services consider the needs of the student in the context of the family. They are developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, and are either delivered within or linked to the school.

4. **Community Development**
Community development is an educational and motivational process that engages community members and organizations and empowers them to participate actively in improving the quality of their lives. Community Schools cooperate with other community groups to develop leadership, define common problems and needs, and develop community-based solutions. This will lead to the development of stable, safe and self-sufficient communities.

5. **Leadership Development and Capacity-Building**
Community Schools encourage the full and skilled participation of all parents and other community members by developing their decision-making, organizational and group process abilities. Focused efforts are made to encourage the participation and to develop the leadership capabilities of parents and community members who traditionally have not played an active role. These include low income families and Indian and Métis peoples. The people who participate in school activities and on the Community School Council reflect the social, economic and cultural make up of the community.

6. **Staff Selection and Development**
The selection of the principal, teachers and other staff for a Community School is critical to the success of the program. In addition to excellent teaching skills, staff must have community development skills and the ability and commitment to affirm the cultural values of the students. Ongoing professional development and inservice programs are essential to increasing the staff's knowledge, skills and awareness appropriate to the unique needs of their students and the communities they serve.

7. **Ongoing Planning, Evaluation and Renewal**
A dynamic planning process is instituted that engages the staff, parents and community members in ongoing planning and evaluation to ensure program improvement. The process involves the development of a **Community School Plan**. Appendix A provides detailed information on how to develop the Community School Plan.

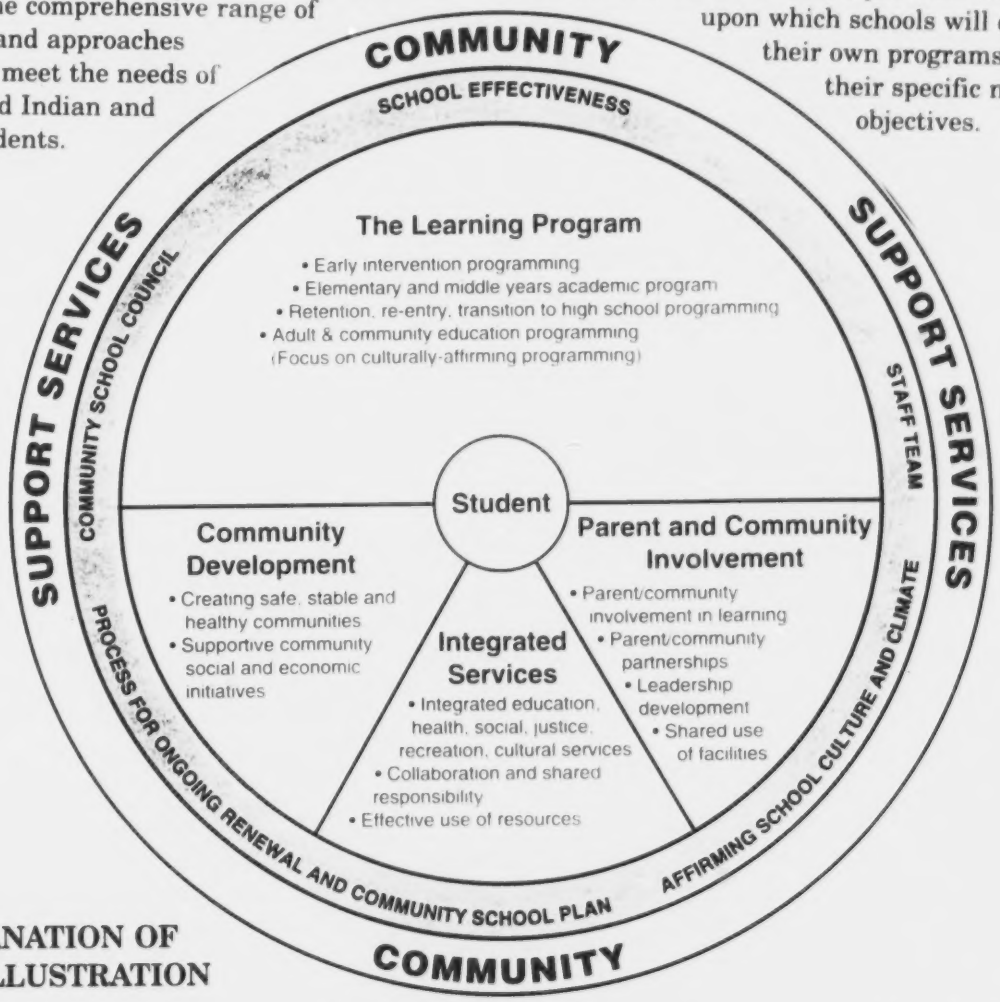
8. **Effective Use of Resources**
The resources of the school and surrounding community are used to maximum effectiveness. These resources include the skills of the people, financial resources across the community, and school facilities.

IV

THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL FRAMEWORK

The following illustration depicts the components within the Community School framework. Taken together, these components provide the comprehensive range of supports and approaches proven to meet the needs of at risk and Indian and Métis students.

Recognizing that every school and community is unique, with different needs, priorities, and resources, this framework provides the basis upon which schools will develop their own programs to meet their specific needs and objectives.


COMMUNITY
SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS
SUPPORT SERVICES
COMMUNITY SCHOOL COUNCIL
STAFF TEAM
PROCESS FOR ONGOING RENEWAL AND COMMUNITY SCHOOL PLAN
AFFIRMING SCHOOL CULTURE AND CLIMATE
The Learning Program
• Early intervention programming
• Elementary and middle years academic program
• Retention, re-entry, transition to high school programming
• Adult & community education programming
(Focus on culturally-affirming programming)
Student
Community Development
• Creating safe, stable and healthy communities
• Supportive community social and economic initiatives
Integrated Services
• Integrated education, health, social, justice, recreation, cultural services
• Collaboration and shared responsibility
• Effective use of resources
Parent and Community Involvement
• Parent/community involvement in learning
• Parent/community partnerships
• Leadership development
• Shared use of facilities
COMMUNITY

EXPLANATION OF THE ILLUSTRATION

In the Community School Framework, the student is at the centre surrounded by the four key components of the school program:

- the learning program,
- parent and community involvement,
- integrated services, and
- community development.

These components are planned and evaluated by the school staff and the Community School Council. They are supported by school effectiveness strategies that include the development of an effective staff team, creation of a supportive and affirming school culture and climate, and management of a dynamic process for ongoing renewal.

The school is the centre of its community and draws on resources and supports from the community.

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A. The Student

The student is the heart of the school and the centre of all activity. All parts of the Community School program focus on and respond to the needs of the students.

B. The Program Components

The four components of the Community School program are:

1. The Learning Program,
2. Parent and Community Involvement,
3. Integrated Services, and
4. Community Development.

These four components work together to provide the comprehensive range of supports required for the education and well-being of at risk students. While the learning program is at the forefront of the Community School's overall program, its success depends on the effectiveness of the other three components. **Together they provide the foundation for the learning program and are critical supports both to its effectiveness and to the success of the students in the school.** The following pages include a description of each of the components and its objectives.

1. THE LEARNING PROGRAM

The learning program is grounded in the provincial curriculum. In addition, it offers a full range of educational supports aimed at increasing students' chances of academic and life success. Its focus is on incorporating educational practices and innovations that respect and reflect the experience, culture and socio-economic background of the students and the community surrounding the school and includes:

- early intervention programming;
- elementary and middle years academic program;
- retention, re-entry, transition to high school programming; and
- adult and community education programming.

Objectives

The objectives of the learning program are to:

- create a learning environment and program that are responsive, culturally affirming and supportive for all students;
- improve the academic achievement of students, reduce age-grade discrepancies and retain students in school by ensuring that curricula is challenging, knowledge and skills-based, and responsive to the student differences;
- foster in students the skills, knowledge, values and self-confidence necessary to become competent, caring and contributing adults;
- provide services and supports that enable students to move smoothly from the preschool years into the elementary and middle years learning program and from there into high school; and,
- provide a range of useful adult and community education opportunities to respond to family and community needs.

Description

a. Early Intervention Programming

Early intervention programming for three and four year-olds is an important part of the learning program of the Community School. While early intervention programs may vary from one school to another, they may include many of the following:

- language development supports,
- fine and gross motor skill development,

- immunizations and regular health check-ups,
- early childhood psychology and mental health services,
- development of social and problem solving skills and self-esteem,
- development of cognitive skills,
- nutrition and meal programs,
- transportation services,
- parent education and support,
- family literacy programming, and
- home-visiting.

In addition to the early intervention programming, the Community School may also house a day care and programs for before school, lunch hour and after school child care.

b. Responsive Elementary and Middle Years Learning Program

The delivery of the provincial curriculum is the core of the Community School's learning program. The Adaptive Dimension within Saskatchewan's Core Curriculum enables teachers to adapt both curriculum content and curriculum delivery to meet the special needs of children. Community Schools are fertile ground for the imaginative use of this opportunity. Teachers work with other staff, parents and community members to adapt instructional materials and create an environment that provides a relevant and challenging opportunities for at risk and Indian and Métis students.

Characteristics of an Effective Learning Program

An effective learning program in a Community School:

- includes meaningful and challenging curricula encouraging all students to achieve their full potential;
- respects and responds to the experiences, cultures, traditions, attitudes, abilities, values and learning needs of all students;
- is comprehensive and flexible;
- recognizes and reflects the nature and unique characteristics of the community surrounding the school;
- links with the community and community agencies to enrich the learning program;
- takes place in a safe and caring environment;
- is planned, orderly and makes effective use of the skills and abilities of the teacher associates and community volunteers; and,
- uses clear, unintimidating and effective evaluation procedures.

Innovations in the learning program in Community Schools include:

- modified and enriched curricula to take into account the social, cultural and racial differences within the student population;
- emphasis on language arts skills particularly with respect to the needs of students for whom English is a second language or a second dialect;
- student clusters based on criteria other than age-grade placement such as family connections;
- peer instruction and support activities;
- parents assisting with the learning program in the classroom or by preparing learning materials;
- scheduling the school day to adapt to the needs of the families and the school community (eg. a breakfast program, shorter lunch breaks and evening supervised homework rooms);
- Indian Languages programs;
- cross-cultural education; and
- in-house Elders.

c. Retention, Re-entry and Transitions to High School

Community Schools are located in areas where much of the population is highly mobile. Families often change neighbourhoods and schools numerous times in the school year.

This mobility creates problems for students as they adjust and readjust to different schools. It also complicates the efforts of teachers to provide an effective learning program.

Community Schools must also provide support to help students move successfully from the relatively small, stable and supportive learning environment of the Community School to enter high school. This transition is often difficult and causes some students to drop out.

Examples of programs and supports provided in Community Schools to address these issues include:

- re-entry classrooms and tutorials that help to ease the transition back into school for students who have been out of school for some time;
- programs to orient graduating students to high school; and,
- work introduction and mentoring programs.

d. Adult and Community Education

Adult and community education programs in Community Schools are developed based on the needs of the families and the community. This programming can include such things as: Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language or Dialect, family literacy, parenting education, self-esteem development, Indian Languages, cultural and recreation programming, and life-skills training.

Program needs are identified by the school community and coordinated and delivered from the school drawing on the strengths, resources and expertise within the community.

2. PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Objectives

The objectives of parent and community involvement are to:

- foster a sense of shared responsibility among parents, community members and educators for the education and well-being of students;
- enhance opportunities for student success by encouraging the active participation of parents and community members in student learning;
- provide opportunities for students to learn within their community and to bring the community into the classroom;
- encourage effective and skilled participation of parents, other community members and groups in setting school goals, introducing and enriching programs, solving problems and enhancing learning activities for students;
- facilitate increased Indian and Métis participation in the management of the public education system;
- develop interagency cooperation and community/school partnerships to access community resources and to link needed services to the school;
- provide educational opportunities, services and facilities to parents and other community members in response to needs and as an "open door" policy linking the school and the community; and,
- facilitate partnerships between parents and community members to create safe and stable communities;
- ensure full and effective use of school facilities by the community.

Description

Parents, family and community members work in partnership with school staff to enhance student learning at home, in the school and in the community. Together they plan and implement school activities and programs, set school goals, identify issues and priorities, introduce program changes, access resources, set school policy and solve problems.

The Community School and the people and organizations linked to it, develop a strong and mutually supportive relationship. The community is an important **resource** for the school. Students have a variety of learning opportunities both in the community and when the community comes into the classroom. Community members share information and life experiences with students as part of the learning program.

While the board of education is responsible for the use of school facilities, in the Community School parents and community members have an increased role in the supervision of activities and take increased responsibility for the use of school facilities. Examples of the range of community uses for school facilities include:

- community meetings and events;
- "safe" rooms for children and youth in distress;
- daycare;
- Community School Council/parent office;
- community counselling and adult education activities;
- recreation, evening and summer programs;
- extended hours for the resource centre; and
- kitchen and laundry.

See appendix C for further information on parent and community involvement and partnerships in education.

3. INTEGRATED SERVICES

Objectives

The objectives of integrated services within Community Schools are to:

- provide and/or coordinate a wide range of responsive social, health, justice and recreation services to address barriers to learning for students and increase their opportunities for success; and,
- make the most effective use of school, community, municipal and provincial resources.

Description

Students who are at risk are often unable to take advantage of the learning program because of complex social, emotional, health and developmental problems which are barriers to their learning. The services and supports they need cut across the boundaries of schools, human service agencies, and different departments and levels of government. Community Schools play a key role in their communities, serving as centres for a range of health, social, counselling, justice, personal support and recreation services either linked to or available within the school.

UNDERSTANDING INTEGRATED SCHOOL-LINKED SERVICES

Integrated School-Linked Services *Are* About:	**Integrated School-Linked Services *Are Not* About:**
• collaboration and partnership • broad-based community involvement	• single agency focus • limited community involvement
• focussing on the student/family and addressing needs of children at risk • more responsive and effective services	• focussing on maintenance of structures/systems over client needs
• shared leadership/ownership, planning, decision-making, resources and evaluation	• single organization leadership/responsibility
• community-based (bottom up) change initiative and management with support from the province	• top down provincially-mandated change and control
• finding ways to make better use of **existing** financial and human resources in the community	• new, additional resources
• building coordination and collaboration into **everyone's** job	• hiring additional staff who are responsible for integrating services (adding to the infrastructure)
• revised organizational mandates, roles and job descriptions, empowerment of field level staff.	• implementing a single mandated model
• finding new ways of structuring organizations and delivering services • fluid and flexible structures, processes and procedures	• delivering services as always but with some small modifications aimed at enhanced coordination • fixed, singular structures and processes
• fundamental change	• tinkering at the edges

(Adapted from Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment, 1994b)

SERVICES AND RESOURCES THAT MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS

Services and resources that address the needs of at risk students are available from: families, school staff and programs, communities, community human service agencies, Indian and Métis organizations, municipal, provincial and federal levels of government. Among the services needed by at risk children and families which could be integrated and linked to the school are:

- **health services** - health education, mental health services, nutrition services and nutrition education, family planning, immunization and medical care;
- **social services** - personal counselling, family welfare services, day care;
- **justice services** - community policing, young offender supports, information about human rights;
- **recreation and cultural services** - sports, leisure activities, cultural activities, heritage languages;

- **employment services** - employment counselling; and,
- **self-help and adult education** - parenting education and skills upgrading.

For further information on Integrated School-Linked Services refer to:

Working Together to Address Barriers to Learning: Integrated School-Linked Services for Children and Youth At Risk, Policy Framework; and

Integrated School-Linked Services for Children and Youth at Risk: Implementation Guide.

Copies of each of these documents are available from the Planning and Evaluation Branch of Saskatchewan Education (787-6769).

4. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Objectives:

The objectives of community development activities in a Community Schools are to:

- assist in the development of the community surrounding the school to foster a safe, stable and healthy environment for students and their families;
- improve opportunities for success in school and fulfillment in life for at risk students through the development of nurturing and safe communities;
- encourage the active involvement of community members and agencies in improving their quality of life; and,
- foster a sense of community in the school neighbourhood by serving as a hub of community activity and development.

Description

Community development is an educational and motivational process that engages and empowers people and communities to actively participate in guiding their social and economic affairs. This activity is critical in Community Schools because children and young people cannot learn and succeed in school and life if the community they return to at the end of each school day is unstable or harmful to them. The difficulties children experience at home or in the community have a direct impact on their ability to succeed in school.

Community Schools are involved in creating safe, stable and healthy communities where people actively participate in improving their quality of life. The community development role of these schools means that they initiate and participate in activities to transform the surrounding community. The Community School Council, the principal and community school coordinator lead in community development activities and identify other leaders and interested organizations.

Some issues that a school might undertake community development activities around include:

- safety and security for children and the community;
- improved housing;
- anti-racism initiatives;
- community justice and crime prevention;
- homelessness and street kids;
- improved facilities for child care,
- support and counselling services for victims of substance abuse or domestic violence; and,
- creating employment opportunities.

Appendix D provides information on the community development process.

C. School Effectiveness

The school effectiveness component guides all the other components of the school including the learning program, the functioning of the Community School Council, and the culture and climate of the school community. The Community School Plan plays an integral part in school effectiveness, ensuring an ongoing process of renewal within the school and its programs.

1. COMMUNITY SCHOOL COUNCIL

Each Community School has a Community School Council made up of representatives from the parents, community, staff, students and includes the principal and community school coordinator. The Council is the focus of the relationship between the school and its community and acts as the initiator, coordinator and evaluator of all aspects of community involvement. It also oversees development and implementation of the Community School Plan and the process for ongoing renewal which includes program evaluation. (See Section V for a complete description of the role of the Community School Council.)

2. PROCESS FOR ONGOING RENEWAL AND THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL PLAN

Within each Community School there is a dynamic and inclusive process for ongoing planning and program evaluation and improvement. This process of renewal is centred in the development and maintenance of the Community School Plan. The Plan is updated each year in a collaborative way by the Community School Council, the principal, the coordinator, the teachers and teacher associates and where possible, representatives from the student body and board of education. The Community School Plan includes:

- a statement of the vision, shared by all participants;
- a needs assessment;
- achievable objectives for the year based on needs and related to developing and implementing the components of the school program;
- an action plan including concrete activities that will serve to implement each of the objectives;
- identification of in-kind contributions, program supports and services, donations and volunteer time from the community and other sources; and,
- a monitoring and evaluation process.

See Appendix A for Guidelines for Developing the Community School Plan.

3. STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TEAM BUILDING

School effectiveness begins with the effectiveness of staff, both as individuals and in the development and coordination of staff teams. The recruitment and development of appropriate staff is critical to the success of the Community School. Selection criteria include understanding and respect for the cultural heritage and life experiences of the students and communities they will be serving. Professional development and inservice in cross-cultural understanding, community development, collaborative processes and community education are necessary for all staff members on an ongoing basis. As well, strategies are needed to ensure effective communications, problem-solving, group processes and change management skills.

4. SCHOOL CULTURE AND CLIMATE

Attention to the development of the school's culture and climate is critical to the effectiveness of the Community School. The school culture is enriched by incorporating the principles outlined in this policy framework and those identified by the community. These principles guide the actions of everyone involved in the school and shape its culture.

Students, educators, staff, parents and community members work to create a respectful, caring, safe environment and a welcoming and supportive school climate. The focus is on providing quality programs, collaborative processes, shared responsibility, and a strong commitment to equity and cross-cultural understanding.

Some of the issues to be addressed in enriching the school's culture and climate include:

- maintaining a focus on the child within the context of the family and community;
- fostering security in the lives of at risk children;
- emphasizing the excellence of the learning program;
- creating a safe, welcoming, stimulating, and comfortable physical setting;
- facilitating effective communication;
- ensuring cultural responsiveness in school practice;
- promoting cultural understanding within the Community School and within the community it serves; and,
- providing a collaborative or consensual approach to developing policies on such issues as discipline and evaluation.

D. The Community

The community is the geographic and social context within which the school functions. It is the neighbourhood surrounding the school and includes the various agencies that provide services and contribute to the well-being of students. These agencies include churches, human service agencies, cultural and recreation groups, government departments, medical services, other education institutions, Indian and Métis organizations, service clubs, and businesses.

V

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The roles and responsibilities outlined below are intended to suggest what is needed from everyone involved to ensure the success of a Community School. This outline is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive. It describes expectations for roles and responsibilities that Community Schools can work toward, while providing the flexibility for variations in contributions, capacities and roles from one school to another.

Included in the roles and responsibilities is the assumption that everyone involved in the Community School will participate in the development and implementation of the Community School Plan and process for ongoing renewal, and support the principles defined in this document.

1. THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL COUNCIL

The Community School Council is made up of representatives of the parents, community, staff and students, as well as the principal and community school coordinator and human services personnel who work with the school. The parents and community members on the Community School Council reflect the socio-economic, and cultural makeup of the school and community.

The Council leads development and implementation of the Community School Plan. It oversees, initiates, coordinates and evaluates the Community School Program according to the Plan. Through these actions, the Council has a role in developing parent and community leadership skills through education, capacity-building and empowerment.

Selection of the Community School Council

Everyone with a student in a Community School is a member of the Community School Council and has the right to attend meetings and participate. The objective is to get as much parent and community involvement and support as possible. Interested individuals from the community are also invited to participate.

Each Council has an executive which is either elected or appointed depending on the needs of the community. General elections are often considered the best way to elect or select members. However, in selecting the Community School Council executive it is important to recognize that elections can be unfamiliar or uncomfortable for some members of the community and can result in an executive or operational arm of the Council that is not fully representative.

The building of an effective and representative Community School Council and executive may require the principal, community school coordinator and other members of the Council to identify potential members and help those people develop the skills and confidence necessary to work effectively as Council/executive members. This additional step will help ensure that the Council is fully representative of both the school and the community.

Selection procedures for the executive may vary among Councils. In many School Councils, the representatives are chosen by their peers – parents are chosen by the parents, teachers by the teachers, students by the students – and community members are appointed by the Council. Whatever approach is used, efforts must be made to ensure that the membership reflects the makeup of the school and the community.

Student participation on the Council executive is vital. Their ideas and contributions are valuable and can provide a perspective very different from the adults on the Council. Including students as members of the

Community School Council executive recognizes them as partners and acknowledges their responsibility for their own education. In many schools, student representatives are from the senior grades and are chosen by the students.

The participation of Indian and Métis peoples in the school is key to successfully implementing the Community School model. In some school divisions an Indian and Métis Reference Committee is in place to provide guidance to the schools and board of education on issues of particular significance to the Indian and Métis community.

Membership on the Community School Council executive will include representation from:

- parents;
- students;
- teachers;
- teacher associate(s);
- human service agencies within or linked to the school; and
- the community;

as well as:

- the principal; and
- the community school coordinator.

The primary role of the Community School Council is to provide advice. In its advisory capacity, the Council shares responsibility for:

Planning

- develop and implement the annual **Community School Plan** and the process for ongoing renewal of the school including program evaluation;
- manage the Council budget with accountability to the board of education and the province;
- have input into school policies such as discipline, attendance, student evaluation and parent/school communications;
- making decisions on policy issues such as school code of conduct and student discipline;

The Learning Program

- participate in planning and developing relevant and innovative educational programs and services;

Evaluation and Data Collection

- oversee the annual evaluation and documentation of program effectiveness and provide an annual report to the board of education and Saskatchewan Education

Parent Involvement and Community Partnerships

- promote collaboration and effective communication among all members of the school and community;
- encourage parent and community participation and provide capacity-building opportunities such as leadership development and adult and community education;
- initiate fund-raising activities and mobilize community resources;
- oversee community use of school facilities and make recommendations concerning improvement and maintenance of building and equipment;

Community Development

- initiate and coordinate activities to address community issues that lead to the development of a safe and stable community;

Integrated Services

- identify school and community needs and work to develop responses drawing on community resources;

Staffing

- recommend criteria for hiring the principal, teaching staff and other workers; and
- develop criteria and participate with the principal in the hiring of the community school coordinator, teacher associates and nutrition program coordinator.

Additional roles and responsibilities, as agreed upon by the board of education and the Council, can be assigned to the Council to facilitate enhanced participation of Indian and Métis peoples within the public education system.

2. The Community School Coordinator

The coordinator works closely with the principal and the Community School Council. The coordinator is a professional community worker with a background in community development, social work or education and reports to the principal. The coordinator provides leadership in integrated services, community development and parent and community involvement within the school and for other neighbouring schools.

The community school coordinator has a responsibility to:

Community School Planning and Implementation

- work with the principal, teachers, parents and community members as a team in implementing and coordinating all aspects of the Community School Program. This includes: parent and community involvement, integrated services and community development as well as the Community School Plan and process for ongoing renewal;
- assist in developing a positive, caring and supportive culture and climate in the school;

Parent Involvement and Community Partnerships

- develop an effective Community School Council that reflects the community and work with the Council to develop leadership skills and the capacity among members to become meaningfully involved in educational and community affairs;
- encourage community and parent involvement and develop the capacity among parents and other members of the community to participate effectively in all aspects of the Community School;
- develop, coordinate and/or deliver adult learning opportunities such as family literacy programs, parenting education, Adult Basic Education, pre-employment, and self-help courses;

Integrated Services

- work with the Council to identify the needs of the students and the community, and organize effective responses;
- identify and establish partnerships with human service providers and other community agencies to develop and coordinate integrated education, health, social, justice and recreation services and programs for students and their families;

Community Development

- initiate and participate in activities to identify community issues and undertake activities to address them;
- coordinate the involvement of the teacher associates in community activities;

Extension Supports

- provide support to neighbouring schools in areas such as: enhancing parent and community involvement in the school, integrated services, community development, and developing a positive, caring and supportive culture and climate in the school; and,
- interpret and promote the Community School Program to the community and facilitate communications between parents, community and the school through such communications vehicles as public speaking engagements, workshops and newsletters.

3. THE TEACHER ASSOCIATES

Teacher associates are of Indian or Métis ancestry, where possible, and from the community in which the school is located. They serve as role models, particularly for Indian and Métis students and play a substantial role in enriching and enhancing the learning program. By providing information about the culture and the community, they help teachers become more aware of, and sensitive to, the cultural and socio-economic differences.

As well, teacher associates play a capacity-building role in working with parents and the community. They work to ensure that parents and community members are aware of school activities and events and encourage their active participation. They identify and develop leadership among parents and community members, promoting involvement in the Community School Council.

The teacher associate and the classroom teacher form a cooperative relationship. The teacher associate provides support in the classroom, works with individual students and assists with the teaching.

Teacher associates have a responsibility to:

- act as the primary liaison between parents and the learning program of the school. This involves frequent home visits and maintaining clear, up-to-date knowledge of the home situation of the students;
- encourage awareness of and participation in school and community events and activities;
- identify and encourage leadership among school and community members and promote active participation on the Community School Council;
- participate in developing the Community School Plan and the process for ongoing renewal; and,
- work directly with the teacher and with students, individually and in groups, including:
  - participating in the planning of lessons, preparing instructional materials and collecting resource material;
  - assisting in the development and delivery of instructional programs, and
  - participating in case planning and management for the provision of integrated services for students.

4. THE PRINCIPAL

The role of the principal in a Community School requires a dynamic, innovative and committed professional. The principal will have sound knowledge of effective educational strategies and programs for Indian, Métis and at risk students. The role demands leadership capability in community development processes and superior collaborative and interpersonal skills. As well, a strong commitment to the development and involvement of parents and community members in school planning, problem-solving and service delivery is required.

The principal:

- has overall responsibility for the learning program as well as parent and community involvement, integrated services and community development;
- participates actively on the Community School Council executive and encourages the representational participation of parents and community members, especially Indian and Métis peoples and people living in poverty. This includes identifying and developing leadership skills among parents and communities and sharing decision-making powers;
- works with the Community School Council in the development and implementation of the annual Community School Plan and the process for ongoing renewal;
- identifies and develops partnerships with community agencies and organizations, mobilizing resources and supports; and,
- promotes the school and advises the larger community about the purposes, programs and successes of the Community School.

5. TEACHERS

Teachers in Community Schools have a strong commitment to Indian and Métis and at-risk students and a specialized knowledge of their learning needs and life experiences. The ability to develop and adapt curricula and teaching techniques to be responsive to student needs and experiences is critical. They are innovative, flexible, cooperative, and caring in their approach to teaching.

The careful selection of the teaching staff is critical to the quality of the learning program. Teachers will be appointed by the board of education, but will be selected based on criteria that include input from the Community School Council.

Because of the relatively high proportion of Indian and Métis students in Community Schools, many make an effort to hire teachers of Indian or Métis background. In addition to their knowledge of Indian and Métis history, culture and traditions, they function as role models for all students, but particularly for Indian and Métis students.

Teachers have a responsibility to:

- develop a knowledge of the community within which they are working and of the educational needs of Indian, Métis and at risk students;
- develop meaningful and challenging programs within Saskatchewan's Core Curricula that respond to the needs and realities of students' lives;
- work cooperatively and collaboratively with the community school coordinator, teacher associates, parents, community members and other human service professionals to achieve excellence in the learning program and meet the needs of students;
- develop effective communications and liaison with parents and the home;
- have a commitment to ongoing professional development in the areas of enhanced parent and community partnerships, cultural responsiveness, community education and development; and,
- play an active part in the development of the Community School Plan and process for ongoing renewal.

6. THE NUTRITION COORDINATOR

While arrangements for this position vary from school to school depending on resources and availability of volunteer supports, this position is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school nutrition program. **The Nutrition Coordinator has a responsibility to:**

- coordinate and/or prepare healthy and nutritious breakfasts, lunches and/or snacks;
- conduct classes for parents, students and other community members on such topics as nutrition, food preparation and food buying on a budget;
- train and coordinate volunteers from among the parents and community to assist with the program; and,
- participate in developing the Community School Plan and the process for ongoing renewal.

7. SUPPORT STAFF

The role of the secretary, caretaker, library technician and itinerant staff such as counselors, social workers, speech pathologists in supporting Community Schools is critical.

Support Staff have a responsibility to:

- be an active part of the support team for the students in the school;
- develop a knowledge of the community within which they are working and of the educational needs of Indian and Métis and at risk students; and,
- participate in the development of the Community School Plan and process for ongoing renewal.

8. STUDENTS

Students are the heart of the Community School and the focus of its programs and services.

Students:

- take responsibility for their own learning and actively participate in the learning opportunities afforded by the high quality education program and by access to the broad range of activities and supports;
- provide representation on the Community School Council executive;
- provide peer support and assistance to other students in the Learning Program; and
- participate in developing the Community School Plan and process for ongoing renewal.

9. PARENTS

Parents play a key role as partners in the success of the Community School. Their involvement is encouraged and actively sought and is critical to achieving student success.

Parents have a responsibility to:

- provide the necessary nurturing and support their children need to participate effectively in school;
- be actively involved in their children's learning and participate in school programs and activities to the extent they are able; and,
- participate in the development and implementation of the Community School Plan and process for ongoing renewal.

10. THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Boards of education partner with the provincial government, community organizations, human service agencies, schools, families and community members in the creation of Community Schools. They provide direction and support to each of the components of the Community School.

The board of education has a responsibility to:

- develop and implement comprehensive employment and education equity policies (see glossary of terms for possible scope of equity policy);
- determine the amount and nature of financial and in-kind contributions to Community Schools within its jurisdiction;
- develop a strategy for the selection, orientation, ongoing professional development and in-service training of staff;
- ensure input from the Community School Council in the hiring process;
- recognize the challenging and labour intensive demands of Community Schools, and provide adequate human and other resources for their operation; and,
- coordinate annual evaluation and documentation of program impact for individual schools.

11. COMMUNITY AGENCIES, GROUPS AND VOLUNTEERS

Community agencies, groups and volunteers provide a variety of critical supports to the learning program and for the well-being of students and their families. They include churches, service clubs, human service agencies, municipal and provincial services, businesses, Friendship Centres, and community associations.

Community Agencies/Volunteers:

- participate on the Community School Council when appropriate;
- participate where appropriate in the development of the Community School Plan;
- work with the Council, principal, community school coordinator and staff in providing a range of supports to meet the needs of the students and their families;
- respect the values and rules of the school; and,
- maintain the confidentiality of student records and information.

12. Role of Government Departments

The provincial departments of Social Services, Health, Justice, Municipal Government (culture, recreation and housing services) have roles to play in working with Community Schools. They provide a number of the services critical to the well-being and success of students and their families. Through the Integrated School-Linked Services program, provincial services are assessed and realigned, where possible, to provide an integrated, coordinated range of supports accessible to students and their families.

13. Saskatchewan Education

Saskatchewan Education provides the overall vision, principles, goals and guidelines for the Community Schools Program. In partnership with boards of education, it provides funding for the Community Schools Program and is responsible for its overall management. The Department collects data and evaluative information from the Community Schools, preparing reviews and reports as needed. It maintains close links with the schools and boards of education and provides consultation and advice upon request.

The Department will:

- provide the overall direction for the development of Community Schools;
- manage the provincial Community Schools Program;
- provide support, consultation and information to schools and boards of education;
- share in the provision of funding for Community Schools;
- receive and analyze data from Community Schools to document their effectiveness and to ensure accountability;
- carry out research and maintain information on current trends and issues related to community education, needs of at risk and Indian and Métis students, and successful education approaches;
- promote the Community School approach and innovations of individual schools; and
- work with boards of education to implement innovative programs and approaches for at risk and Indian and Métis students within the public education system.

VI

EVALUATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Ensuring that the approaches taken to meet the learning needs of Indian and Métis and at risk students are effective and that the resources used are employed to the best possible advantage, are pressing responsibilities. Community Schools face the challenge of demonstrating that their approach is viable and effective.

Evaluation is critical to ensuring the effectiveness and success of Community Schools. It has been built into the Community School Plan as part of the process for ongoing renewal. Through evaluation processes all involved with the school have the opportunity to review and assess the success of the Community School Plan and plan for program improvements.

EVALUATION APPROACHES

Both **qualitative** and **quantitative** processes are useful in collecting data to assess the effectiveness of the Community School Program. Quantitative processes are based on the collection of numerical data. Qualitative information is collected through anecdotal reporting techniques and describes the experience of the participants and their perceptions of the program. When combined with the numerical data, qualitative analysis provides a more holistic and complete evaluation.

EVALUATION RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibility for gathering information on the strengths and effectiveness of the Community Schools Program is shared by all involved.

A. THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

The Community School Council, together with the principal and coordinator, lead in the evaluation of the program. The evaluation is based on how effectively the school is meeting the objectives stated for each of the components of the program (the learning program, parent and community involvement, integrated services and community development), and the specific objectives of each school.

An evaluation report will be provided to the board of education and to Saskatchewan Education at the end of each school year. In addition, monthly statistical reports are required by the Department. Report forms are available from the Planning and Community Education Unit, Saskatchewan Education.

B. BOARDS OF EDUCATION

Boards of education provide assistance to Community Schools in the development and implementation of their evaluation plans. The board of education receives the annual evaluation report prepared by the school.

C. SASKATCHEWAN EDUCATION

Saskatchewan Education ensures the accountability of Community Schools at the provincial level by receiving and analyzing the statistical data and annual reports of each Community School. This information is used to prepare provincial profiles that document the effectiveness of the program. The Department provides consultation and support to Community Schools and boards of education to assist in program evaluation.

D. COOPERATING AGENCIES AND GROUPS

As the integrated services component in a Community School develops, participating agencies may seek to evaluate their school-based or school-linked programs. Such evaluations will form an important part of the overall Community Schools evaluation report.

Appendix B provides a detailed Evaluation Guide for Community Schools.

APPENDICES

A. GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL PLAN

B. EVALUATION GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

C. CONTINUUM OF PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

D. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

E. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

F. REFERENCES

A

GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL PLAN

The Community School Plan is an important part of school effectiveness and provides the framework for the process for ongoing renewal. It is based on the vision, goals, strategies and principles outlined in this document. However, the Plan identifies and responds to the needs and issues of individual schools and their communities.

The development of an annual Community School Plan is critical to the success of the Community School for the following reasons:

- It enables Community Schools to identify local issues and needs and respond in a relevant and meaningful way.
- It involves all Community School participants and community partners in a process to determine their shared vision, commonly-determined objectives and actions. As well, it facilitates leadership development, problem solving and capacity-building within the community.
- It strengthens the efforts of Community Schools to be effective in meeting the needs of at risk and Indian and Métis students and in developing the larger community by encouraging the precise identification and articulation of shared objectives and activities.
- It provides the basis for measuring the effectiveness of the school program and direction for future planning.

Getting Started – Who's Involved?

The Community School Council oversees the development, implementation and evaluation of the Plan. The Council executive will want to involve students, parents, members of the community, staff, the school division, and representatives of the service agencies linked to the school in all aspects of the planning cycle.

Elements of the Community School Plan

The following elements should be included in the Plan:

- a statement of the school's vision, shared by all participants;
- an assessment of the needs of the students, the school and the community in terms of the well-being and success of the students;
- achievable objectives for the year;
- an action plan;
- identification of program supports; and,
- a monitoring and evaluation process.

1. VISION

The vision is a statement describing the ideal learning community that your group would like to create and the ideal achievement for students. The vision is stated as though it has already been accomplished. There are many processes that can be used in developing a shared vision, however the key ingredient is to involve everyone who will be affected by it.

While your vision may become more refined as you progress through the planning process, it is a good idea to record a draft vision early on. Once you have established the vision for your school, make it visible and well-known to students, parents, community members, staff and other service providers.

Vision Statement:

To get started, why not refer to the vision for all Community Schools provided on page 9.

Vision for _____ Community School:

2. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A needs assessment is a critical step in any planning process because it helps you plan programs based on people's actual needs rather than guessing their needs. Be sure to involve students, parents, community members, staff and service providers in planning and implementing the needs assessment.

A needs assessment has three basic steps:

- identification of needs;
- identification of services, resources and strengths to address needs; and,
- analysis of gaps and overlaps.

Needs Identification

In identifying needs you may be able to draw upon work that has already been done, such as needs assessments completed by your board of education, the district health board or other community agencies. While this may not provide the specific information you require, it may help you by providing a broader perspective.

To collect the information, you will need to decide:

- who to talk to;
- how to collect the information (questionnaire, workshops, interviews, etc.); and,
- who will collect the information.

Once you have your plan for the needs assessment in place, collect the information and then list and assign priority to the needs. You may wish to use the following chart to record needs and assign priority to them.

COMMUNITY SCHOOL PLAN:
Needs and Priority

PRIORITY	NEEDS

Date: 36

Identification of Services, Resources and Strengths

Take an inventory of the existing resources and strengths in your school, school division and community. The inventory may include people, time, skills, services, supports, money and knowledge. Focus on specific needs and seek resources to match those needs. In identifying and reviewing the services, resources and strengths, consider the measurable features including:

- service agency mandate, beliefs and philosophy;
- the type and variety of service;
- target population and age range;
- geographic location of service;
- accessibility of service;
- service fees and funding options;
- consistency of service with cultural values of service users;
- service times, hours of operation and calendar year;
- transportation issues for users of the service;
- length of time until the child or family can begin to use the service;
- availability of currently existing integrated programs; and,
- staff qualifications.

(Adapted from Swan & Morgan, 1993)

Analysis of Gaps and Overlaps

(Note: This step may not be necessary depending on your students' needs.)

This analysis involves matching existing resources, services and strengths with identified needs, then determining how to fill the gaps and how to address the overlaps. Sometimes a service, resource or strength may exist in the community but may not be sufficient to meet the need. In other cases, the service, resource or strength may be unavailable or unaccessible. The challenge in addressing the gaps will be to reallocate resources or find new resources to meet the needs.

A Gaps and Overlaps analysis form is provided on the following page to assist you in completing this step.

COMMUNITY SCHOOL PLAN:

Gaps and Overlaps Analysis Tool

Needs (from needs assessment) ↓	**School, School Division and Community Services and Resources** ↔						

Date: _____

3. OBJECTIVES

Objectives should be achievable and measurable. They will be based what you plan to achieve in meeting the need you have identified and are related to developing and implementing the four components of the school program:

- the learning program,
- parent and community involvement,
- integrated services; and,
- community development.

Broad objectives for each of these components are included in the policy framework, pages 13 to 20. You may wish to establish specific objectives for each of these as they relate to your school.

4. ACTION PLAN

The action plan will include concrete activities for each of the four components (the learning program, parent and community involvement, integrated services and community development) that will serve to implement the objectives. Identify the planned actions, who will take responsibility for those actions and the timeline for the activity.

5. PROGRAM SUPPORTS

Program supports may include Community School funding, services, donations, fund-raising, in-kind contributions, and volunteer time from the community and other sources.

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROCESS

Devise a process to monitor and evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of your community school plan. Appendix B provides indepth information on evaluation.

The following forms will assist you in creating the action plan for your school. The first form will help you determine activities that support the needs and objectives that have been identified. The second will assign responsibility, set timelines and allocate services, resources and strengths to support the accomplishment of the action plan.

COMMUNITY SCHOOL PLAN:

Action Plan – Part 1

Needs	Objectives	Program Activities to Achieve Objectives
1. The Learning Program		
2. Parent and Community Involvement		
3. Community Development		
4. Integrated Services		

Date: _____

COMMUNITY SCHOOL PLAN:

Action Plan – Part 2

Program Activities to Support the Action Plan	Services, Resources and Strengths	Responsiblilty	Timeline
1. The Learning Program			
2. Parent and Community Involvement			
3. Community Development			
4. Integrated Services			

Date: _____

B

EVALUATION GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

The following Evaluation Guide is based upon the goals, principles, and strategies outlined in this document and is intended to guide the Community School Council in developing its own evaluation plan.

PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

The purposes for evaluating individual Community School programs are:

- to demonstrate accountability and effectiveness of the overall approach; and
- to identify strengths and weaknesses in the Community School program in order to support program improvement and renewal.

Evaluation is conducted by the people who are actually involved in the development and implementation of the Community School program. The program participants control evaluation design and process, and interpret the results. Because of the direct involvement of the program participants, the evaluation provides information based on the needs of the students, parents, community and the school.

During the evaluation process, these people are engaged in constant reflection and critical discussion that addresses questions they have about their work. This enables them to identify:

- what issues they have in common;
- how things worked or didn't work; and,
- why and how improvements can be made.

The greatest advantage of including an evaluation process as part of program development and delivery is that it can provide much of the information required to make decisions and solve problems. For example, the evaluation can be designed to collect information about what factors inside and outside of the school are affecting the success of the program. The Council can then take steps to ensure the negative factors are reduced and the positive factors reinforced.

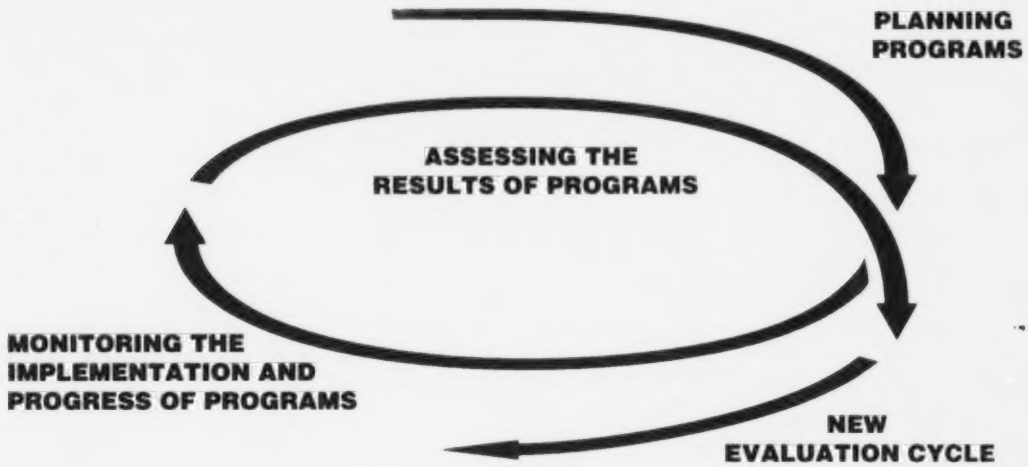
Evaluation results help the Council determine what to do next. The evaluation process is another important part of the Community School program development and delivery. Because it is ongoing, it is best described as an evaluation cycle.

The Evaluation Cycle

Evaluation is an on-going activity that includes ways to make use of the information from the evaluation while it is being conducted, and also at the end. Continuous feedback of assessment information to all those involved communicates what is happening and what is being learned.

The evaluation process lags slightly behind all phases of program development, from planning through to implementation. All of the information obtained throughout one evaluation cycle is fed into the next round of program planning and a new evaluation cycle begins. Figure 1 illustrates the evaluation cycle.

Figure 1: Evaluation Cycle


PLANNING PROGRAMS
ASSESSING THE RESULTS OF PROGRAMS
MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION AND PROGRESS OF PROGRAMS
NEW EVALUATION CYCLE

Planning Programs

Beginning the evaluation process early in the development of the Community School program makes it possible to revise plans prior to implementation, if necessary.

Monitoring Program Implementation

This stage of the evaluation focuses on the operation of the program. Information that is gathered is used to address any gaps or problems that may be revealed or make slight program modifications as implementation proceeds. Issues or needs may surface that have not been identified during program planning.

Assessing the Results of Programs

This is the stage that typically receives the most attention. At this point the results of program delivery are documented and measured according to stated goals and objectives or desired standards. In addition to the outcomes you expect, there may also be unintended outcomes which may be as important as the intended ones. Unintended outcomes should be carefully watched for, recorded and considered during the evaluation.

New Evaluation Cycle

All of the information obtained through the evaluation process is eventually used to make decisions about how the Community School might be improved or readjusted to the changing needs of the students, school and the community. In this way, evaluation helps set the course for the process of ongoing renewal. As program development moves into its next cycle, the evaluation process follows right behind.

Ethical Considerations

Throughout the evaluation, there are several ethical guidelines to follow in order that the individual or collective rights of the participants, or 'study subjects' are respected and ensured. These include the right to:

- be informed of the precise nature of the evaluation, so that informed consent may be given or withheld;
- know of the risks and benefits;
- privacy and confidentiality;
- accurate and respectful description of cultural heritage and customs; and
- discreet use of information on the lives and aspirations of members of cultural groups.

The Process of Evaluation

The following steps of an evaluation process helps ensure that the evaluation yields useful and informative results:

1. **DEFINE THE SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION**
2. **DESIGN THE EVALUATION**
3. **WRITE THE EVALUATION PLAN**
4. **CONDUCT THE EVALUATION**
5. **PROCESS THE INFORMATION**
6. **USE THE RESULTS**

A more detailed description of the steps in the evaluation process follows.

1. DEFINE THE SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The Community School Council is responsible for overseeing the evaluation and documentation of program effectiveness. As part of the development of the overall Community School Plan, the Council begins organizing the evaluation effort by deciding the parameters of the evaluation study.

Caution should be taken when setting the scope because evaluation can be a time-consuming process. If there are too many areas or issues incorporated into the evaluation it could become impossible to manage.

In addition to time constraints, availability of other resources (eg. staff and funds) are taken into consideration when setting priorities for what will be evaluated. Initially, the Council might also want to limit the scope of the evaluation simply because the first evaluation will be a learning experience for all involved.

While scope must be determined in the beginning in order to get started, it is also difficult to anticipate how much can be accomplished in advance. **It is recommended that the scope of the evaluation be reassessed throughout its development to ensure it is appropriate.**

Defining the scope of the evaluation involves the following seven steps:

- Setting goals and objectives
- Identifying audiences
- Determining issues
- Locating and assigning resources
- Finalizing and assigning priorities to goals and objectives
- Setting standards

Setting Goals and Objectives

Evaluations are often conducted for several different purposes. These reasons for the evaluation are expressed in the evaluation plan as goals and objectives.

Because the evaluation describes and measures the impact of the Community School program, the goals and objectives for the evaluation will relate to the goals and objectives of the program.

Although the evaluation goals will be determined from the program goals they will not be the same. On the following chart, an example is given, using one of the program goals, to illustrate how a program goal differs from an evaluation goal.

PROGRAM GOAL	*EVALUATION GOAL*
To offer a high quality education program.	To assess the education program in terms of its adequacy, appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency and indirect effects.

In addition to the basic goals for the program (outlined on pages 9–10) you may want to include others that you identify for your own Community School.

Similarly, evaluation objectives are chosen by relating them to the objectives of the program. So, continuing with the example of a program goal on the previous page, program and evaluation objectives could be identified as in the following example:

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE	***EVALUATION OBJECTIVE***
To include curriculum elements that address the personal and social development of the students.	To assess the effects of the personal and social curriculum elements on the students.

Narrowing the evaluation to the most meaningful and important goals and objectives involves a number of other considerations. The Council needs to ask:

- WHO has questions they want answered?
- WHAT information do they want?
- WHAT will they do with the information?

Identifying and Consulting Audiences

Audiences for the evaluation are the individuals or groups who are either directly involved in the program or who will have an interest in the information that will be generated from the evaluation. Identifying the audiences answers the WHO question and is the next step in defining the scope of the evaluation. Some suggested audiences might be:

- the Community School staff, students and Council;
- the Board of Education;
- members of the community; and
- community agencies and groups that are providing a range of supports to the learning program.

Determining Issues

When the audiences for the evaluation are known, the next step in determining scope is to consult with representatives from each audience group to get their points of view about what are the most important or critical issues to be addressed. These people will help the Council determine what specific information is wanted from the evaluation for each group.

When exploring issues to be evaluated, it is important to ensure that all aspects of the program are considered. In the evaluation of Community Schools, it is meaningful to consider not only the program elements and services provided but also the growth and development of the community, program, staff and students.

Figure 2 will help identify issues by reviewing all aspects of the program. Along the top and the side of the chart are the two major aspects of the program; its components and its environment. The program components and environments need to considered in combination because they are always interacting; they cannot be examined in isolation. It is also important to note that the issues identified from looking at these combinations will differ depending upon whether or not the evaluation is occurring during the planning, monitoring or outcome phases of program development.

To illustrate how issues can be identified, refer to Figure 2 below. Contained within the box in the upper left hand corner is **parent and community involvement** and **school effectiveness**. In the planning part of the evaluation cycle, one of your audiences might have an issue that addresses the question - What ways for involving parents and the community to enhance the effectiveness of the Community School have not been identified? For another example, the box to the immediate right holds the combination of **integrated services** and **school effectiveness**. Issues can be identified from this combination as well. Looking at these combinations ensures that a complete list of the evaluation issues are being defined after careful consideration of all the possible angles from which to examine the program.

Figure 2: ***Identifying all the Possible Issues for Evaluation***

PROGRAM COMPONENTS				
PROGRAM ENVIRONMENT	**Parent and Community Involvement**	**Integrated Services**	**Community Development**	**Learning Program**
School Effectiveness				
Staff Team				
Community School Council				
Process for Ongoing Renewal				
School Culture and Climate				

Once the issues have been identified from the stakeholder consultation process they are then priorized in order of importance. Answering YES to the following questions may help you in selecting the most appropriate issues:

1. Is there an adequate level of agreement about the questions to be asked?
2. Is the information required to answer the questions available and accessible?
3. Are the questions clear and answerable?
4. Are the questions of central importance to the program evaluation?
5. Will the answers to the questions provide sufficient information to assess the evaluation objectives?

The Community School Council should periodically reconsider the issues to be addressed because issues may change or lose importance as the evaluation progresses, and it may be necessary to revise the focus or scope of the evaluation.

Locating and Assigning Resources

Before embarking on the evaluation, the Council should decide what resources are likely to be available for the evaluation. Specific responsibilities will be assigned to certain people on the evaluation team for conducting the evaluation. Decisions will have to be made about how the evaluation will be managed and who will be responsible for each aspect.

An estimation of cost for supplies, time expenditures and human resources is needed. Evaluation costs are not often very high.

Finalizing and Assigning Priorities to Goals and Objectives

Once the final list of priority issues has been drawn and resources have been designated, the basis for finalizing the objectives for the evaluation are set. You may find that some issues will have surfaced that do not fit within the objectives the Council had originally set. Or, after reviewing the resources you have available to conduct the evaluation, some of the original objectives will simply not be feasible to include.

This is a good time to reassess your goals and objectives to determine if they should be altered in light of the questions your stakeholders think are important to explore in the evaluation, and whether you have the time, resources and skills to adequately address them all. In cases where there are many priority areas, the Council may have to opt for an evaluation approach where different program areas are reviewed one by one; a rotational approach to evaluation.

Setting Standards

In order to make an assessment of whether or not the Community School program is making an impact, the Council has to be clear about what the program is attempting to achieve. Statements are written that describe the intended or desired performance standards of the program. An example of a standard to use as a measure of attaining a program goal is given in the following chart.

PROGRAM GOAL	*STANDARD*
Increased participation in management by Indian and Métis people.	Indian and Métis people are to be represented across all occupational ranks of the school staff.

Developing a Work Schedule

A logical next step is to develop a practical schedule for carrying out the evaluation. Each task to be completed for the evaluation is listed along with a completion date, resources required and personnel who are assigned to the responsibility.

2. DESIGN THE EVALUATION

Once you have drawn clear parameters for the evaluation, the next major part involves putting together a design that maps out the strategy for the actual conduct of the evaluation.

There are essentially three steps to development in the evaluation design:

- Choosing evaluation questions
- Identifying the sources of information
- Selecting the tools to collect the information

By working through these steps the purposes for the evaluation can be linked to its intended use.

Choosing Evaluation Questions

The objectives that are selected for the evaluation serve as the basis for formulating questions. For example, an objective related to the goal of leadership in educational innovation could be "What has been done to ensure that instructional delivery strategies are compatible with students learning styles and have been incorporated into the learning program?". And, from this objective, a number of questions listed below could be generated:

1. What specifically has been introduced to the instructional design of the learning program to accommodate student learning styles?
2. To what extent are the students exhibiting improvements as a response to accommodating their learning styles in the delivery of instruction?
3. Is the selection of instructional delivery strategies the most appropriate choice out of all the possible alternatives?

Because the list of possible questions to address in an evaluation could be very large, decisions about which questions to be included are essential.

Identifying Sources of Information

There are many appropriate data sources to choose from when evaluating the Community School program.

Some are printed:	*Some are human:*	*Some are documentary:*
• learning program curriculum	• students	• test results
• texts	• teachers	• records
• teacher resources	• administrators	• meeting minutes
• student materials	• parents	• policy statements
• the Community School Plan	• community groups	• financial statements
• previous studies or evaluations	• trustees	• staff work reports, time sheets
	• government officials	

Selecting the Tools to Collect Information

Evaluations should use a variety of methods to investigate and gather information. There are three major methods of data collection:

1. RECORDING SYSTEMS

The most inexpensive source of information is the documentation and records that you already have on hand. As much as possible, it is very useful to develop a method of recording and feeding back information as an integral part of the Community School plan. Then when it comes time to assemble information for the evaluation, much of it will already be there.

2. SURVEYS

Surveys as a data collection method consist of interviews and questionnaires and are used to generate the following types of data:

- statistical data;
- feelings and opinions;
- interpretations and analyses of experiences;
- factual accounts of experiences.

3. OBSERVATION

Observations can generate information ranging from individual and group functioning through to the degree of integration of services. Observation methods require viewing an activity or condition and recording what is observed in a systematic way. These methods can be conducted in several ways and the methods selected depend on the purpose of the observation and what is being observed.

When deciding which data gathering technique to use it is helpful to consider:

- **Design of the data collection tools** - will the tool collect data that is useful and appropriate for making future decisions?
- **Type of data** - does the approach collect both objective and subjective data? Should it?
- **Reporting upon the data collected** - does the technique provide for easy interpretation and reporting?
- **Personnel** - does the method require large numbers of staff?
- **Cost implications** - do costs relate efficiently to benefits received?

The evaluation must be useful to the Community School and be relevant to the program goals and decision-making needs. Simple and non-threatening evaluative techniques ensure that individual sensitivities and needs are respected.

3. Write the Evaluation Plan

Formalizing the evaluation plan on paper provides something concrete to refer to along the way. It also ensures that everyone involved in the development of the evaluation is in agreement about its direction and process. The following suggested outline for the evaluation plan can be incorporated into the larger Community School Plan outlined in Appendix A:

- A brief description of the evaluation process
- The purpose for the evaluation
- A description of information collection and handling procedures
- A timeline
- A description of how the information will be used
- A budget

Once the evaluation plan is finalized by the Council, you might consider it helpful to pass it on to your school division central office and/or Saskatchewan Education to obtain feedback. There may be parts of your evaluation plan that you are uncertain about and either the school division or the Department could provide useful advice.

4. Conduct the Evaluation

When the plan is in place, the evaluation can begin. Space does not permit providing a comprehensive guide to conducting a program evaluation here. For further information on conducting a program evaluation please refer to:

- *Saskatchewan School-Based Program Evaluation Resource Book* (1989) available from the Saskatchewan Book Bureau;
- *A Program Evaluation Resource Book For Health Districts* (1995) produced by Saskatchewan Health;
- *Integrated School-Linked Services for Children and Youth at Risk: Implementation Guide* (1994) produced by Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment;

- *Saskatchewan's Prevention and Support Grants: A Guide to Evaluation*, produced by Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Children Steering Committee.

5. PROCESS THE INFORMATION

In general, the type of data analysis conducted is directly linked to the concerns of audiences, the type and quality of the results and the audiences' ability to understand summary information. Many evaluation studies require only descriptive information, presented in a convenient, useable and understandable format. Good data analysis will provide descriptions of the Community School program, highlighting those aspects relevant to particular issues or audiences.

Data analysis needs to be done throughout the evaluation process, not just at the end. It will need to be discussed by those on the Community Council, staff, and students. This is how the evaluation can be of most use in improving the program. It may also be necessary to adjust the focus of the evaluation if the original design isn't providing the information desired. New questions or issues may come to light that were not anticipated initially.

There are many ways to analyze evaluation data. The choice of analytical technique depends upon the types of information that have been gathered and their intended use, as well as the resources that are available for the analysis. Again, it is beyond the scope of this manual to provide the detail to guide analysis of survey results. Please consult the references listed on the previous page for more information.

6. USE THE EVALUATION RESULTS

Evaluation is valuable only when it provides useful results which lead to decisions and actions. This final part of the evaluation involves:

- **Reflection**
- **Writing the Evaluation Report**
- **Acting on the Results**

Reflection

At this point, the summarized data are reviewed with the intention of developing some generalized conclusions about the meaning. Decisions are made about how well the Community School is meeting both the objectives it set out for the program and the standards of program performance. It is a process of really taking stock of what has been accomplished.

Although it is a time-consuming procedure, this step of reviewing all the information and arriving at the conclusions and implications is the essence of the evaluation process. It is critical, then, to carry this out systematically, issue by issue. A draft of the conclusions can be circulated among the various audiences for reaction and modification.

During this step, the evaluation team spends some time in assessing the evaluation process itself, reflecting upon the effectiveness of the planning, organizing and information collection procedures. Conclusions about these and recommendations for change are noted for the next evaluation cycle.

Writing the Evaluation Report

Results can be used to publicize the work your evaluation team has done, address specific issues that have come out of the evaluation, and to educate and orient new members to the Community School Council. It is important that results are presented in a user-friendly fashion so that they are easily understood by parents and the community at large.

The following outline illustrates one way of structuring an evaluation report:

I Introduction
II Objectives of the Evaluation
III Methods and Procedures
IV Results
V Interpretation, Conclusions and Recommendations
(Appendices)

The *Introduction* explains the purposes for conducting the evaluation and provides some background material to support the importance of the study. *Objectives of the Evaluation* illustrate what the evaluation is hoping to achieve. The manner in which the evaluation was conducted is specified in the *Methods and Procedures* section. In other words, this is the section where the design of the study is described. In the *Results* section, information is presented that ties the evaluation findings to the evaluation objectives. In Section V, all of the *interpretation* from reflections on the results can be freely expressed along with any *recommendations* or *conclusions* arrived at by the Council. The Appendices contain a copy of the data collection tools used in the study, detailed data and any other information that the Council feels is pertinent to the study.

A copy of the report should go to the school division central office and to Saskatchewan Education.

Acting on the Results

The Community School Council can use the evaluation results to define more clearly what it wants to do, whom they want as partners, and why it should be done. These results essentially feed into the next program planning stage.

Evaluation will help the group to set clear, realistic objectives for future work. As well, the Council can use the information in the report to look at relationships that are useful (or not), and structures and processes and products that could be strengthened, eliminated, or changed.

CONTINUUM OF PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

	MEETING BASIC NEEDS	DEVELOPING OPENNESS / TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION	SUPPORTING LEARNING AT HOME AND IN COMMUNITY	PARTICIPATING IN VOLUNTEER AND ADVISORY ROLES	BUILDING COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS	PARTICIPATING IN DECISION MAKING AND GOVERNANCE
Examples of Activities and Programs	***At home...*** • safe, caring home environment • adequate food, clothing, rest and shelter ***In school/community...*** • nutrition programs • clothing exchanges • "safe rooms" • parenting education • community kitchens	***At home...*** • advise teacher of students likes and dislikes • attend meetings and events ***In school/community...*** • welcoming school environment • parent, student, teacher conferences • school newsletters • home visits • surveys of parent opinion • community use of facilities	***At home...*** • interest in and encouragement for children's learning • creation of a study environment • reading to children ***In school/community...*** • mentoring • community development activities for safe, stable communities ***In the school...*** • family literacy programs • parent/family involvement encouraged in assignments • learning contracts between parents, teachers and students	• attending/assisting with school events • fund raising • volunteering: classroom, field trip, library, lunchroom, etc. • room for volunteers/parents • storytelling/guest speakers • tutoring and students • newsletter coordination • leading 4-H, drama, photography, etc. clubs • parent centres • providing advice on school issues/programs • deciding on policy issues such as school code of conduct, student discipline, etc.	• financial and "in kind" contributions • business partnerships & sponsorships • integrated services • community development • youth community service/work experience • in-school daycare • early intervention preschool	• planning, problem solving • making decisions about: - budget - program adaptations - priorities - criteria for staff and/or staffing - school facilities • training in leadership and decision making skills • program assessment • shared management of project, program or school • partnerships with Indian and Metis peoples
Structure	• self-help groups • school council *	• school/community liaison program • school/community council	• school/community council • school/community liaison program	• volunteer programs • school/community council • school/community liaison program	• advisory committees • interagency committees • school/community council	• school/community councils • district board of trustees • decentralization of authority • co-management board • agreement schools • associate schools • board of education

➤ ➤ ➤ ➤ ➤ ➤ ➤ **increased collaboration with educators, shared responsibility for education, and participation in decision making** ➤ ➤ ➤ ➤ ➤ ➤ ➤

* School Council is used as the term for a parent/community council connected to the school. These councils may be called by many names including: parent council, Home and School Association, parent/teacher association, Local School Advisory Committee, School/Community Association, etc. It should also be understood that the range of responsibilities for such a group may vary widely from planning and coordination of volunteer programs through advisory capacities and initiating collaborative partnerships to shared decision-making and shared management responsibilities.

D

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Community development is the process through which community members and organizations become empowered and improve their own lives. It provides a structure through which they can develop the skills and attitudes necessary for increasing levels of responsibility on school councils and in other organizations.

Specifically, community development is an educational and motivating *process* that engages community members and organizations and empowers them to participate actively in improving the quality of their lives. The key elements in a community development process include:

1. **Realization of the Issue/Needs Identification** – This sometimes occurs spontaneously, as when a group of people get together over coffee and discover that they all share a common concern. It sometimes occurs in more structured ways through community surveys or through discussions at a series of community meetings to define the problem or challenge.
2. **Community Readiness** - This involves assessing the readiness of the community for development.
3. **Community Animation** - Animation is required at the local level to:
   - identify and involve key people and groups who should be involved;
   - create the environment for informed decision-making by the community including research into the cause of the problem and possible solutions.
4. **Achieving Consensus** - Consensus is achieved on the framing of the issue/problem and the desired solution/action.
5. **Action Planning and Resource Mobilization** – This includes identifying resources (people, money and facilities), establishing a time frame and developing a plan to achieve the mutually agreed upon goal. Resource mobilization includes getting community and government agencies working together collaboratively, recruiting volunteers and fund raising in the community.
6. **Local Involvement/Inclusive Process** - Community groups are involved in goal setting, strategic planning and implementation which requires bringing together interested contributors and nurturing local leadership.
7. **Capacity Building** - Community skills are developed and fostered to generate and support local development. Attention is paid to group dynamics and leadership development.
8. **Enabling Environment** - Supports must be created and barriers removed to encourage community initiatives. This means ensuring that structures and systems such as rules, policies and incentives are in place to support taking initiative.
9. **Partnerships and Networking** - This means a shared commitment to pursue agreed-upon goals jointly and in a coordinated manner. Networking is the building of partnerships with other communities and permits the mobilization of resources.
10. **Action, Evaluation and Ongoing Development** (Continuous Renewal).

E

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

At Risk

"Children are at risk if they are likely to fail - either in school or in life" (Frymier and Gansneder, 1989). "A student defined as 'at risk' is one who because of social, economic, physical, or academic problems may not graduate from high school in the traditional manner" (Moskowitz, 1989 in Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, 1993).

Collaboration

Collaboration among different people and organizations is the most sophisticated level of a cooperative/partnership relationship. It is a more intensive and jointly planned effort by people or organizations over a mutual concern that results in a mutually desired outcome. It is a relationship in which the parties share common goals, mutual commitments, resources, decision-making, and evaluation responsibilities. It involves a common goal with a clearly articulated and shared commitment that is within the scope of the general goals of the collaborating agencies (Swan and Morgan, 1993).

Community

A group of people bound together through mutual interest and sense of shared destiny. The "boundaries" can be geographical (a neighbourhood, town, city or region) or non-geographical (such as an ethnic or interest group, school, or workplace). Communities are self-defining. For Community Schools, the community usually includes the geographic area surrounding the school and human service agencies and community groups that are involved with the school. In many cases these agencies and groups may be located outside the immediate geographic area.

Community Animation

A process that encourages and fosters coordinated activity among community members.

Community Development

A learning process where the group dynamic develops to the extent that people are comfortable and confident in the value and worth of their contribution. The group becomes 'animated' at the point where they are motivated or inspired to create new ideas and discover how to steer their social an economic affairs in new directions.

Cooperation

Cooperation is a process of working together informally to achieve the day-to-day goals of the group(s) or organization(s). It represents a superficial level of agency interaction. People/agencies are aware of one another and interact to provide general information, support, or referrals.

Culture

The complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man and woman as a member of society (adapted from the Report of the Saskatchewan Arts Strategy Task Force).

Cultural Services

Services provided by either government or non-government agencies that:

- increase self-esteem, self worth, and confidence in individuals from various groups;
- develop people in a holistic way: mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually;
- teach a way of life so people of diverse cultures can understand and respect each other: and,
- increase the linkage and resource sharing with other cultural organizations.

Early Intervention

The necessary mental, physical, social and emotional supports that are developed and put in place for young children at risk to prevent or lessen the need for more intrusive intervention later on.

Education Equity

All students have the opportunity to experience success and to develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to contribute meaningfully to society. The principle goes beyond equality of opportunity where everyone is treated the same, to fostering a barrier-free environment where individuals benefit equally. The scope of equity can include, but is not limited to:

- Indian and Métis students and adults of both genders, persons with disabilities and visible minorities;
- employment equity;
- curriculum and instruction materials;
- instructional and assessment practices;
- cross cultural education;
- equity in access and benefit;
- school environment;
- student development;
- the school and the community;
- monitoring; and
- leadership development/organizational change and development.

Employment Equity

A comprehensive planning process adopted by an employer to:

- identify and eliminate discrimination in employment procedures and policies;
- remedy the effects of past discrimination;
- ensure appropriate representation of designated groups throughout an employer's workforce (Employment and Immigration Canada, Employment Systems Review).

Empowerment

Strengthening the participation of an individual, group or community in decision-making and control of resources.

Equity

Equity recognizes the value of differences. It also recognizes that not everyone benefits equally from being offered the same opportunities. Equity provides for different treatment where the same treatment will provide unequal effects for members of disadvantaged groups (Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment, 1994b).

Family

Families have many forms and it is the family relationships that are critical to a child's well-being. A family can be defined as any combination of two or more persons bound together by ties of mutual consent, birth and/or adoption/placement and who, together, assume responsibility for variant combinations of some of the following: physical maintenance and care of group members; addition of new members through procreation or adoption; socialization of children; social control of members; production, consumption, and distribution of goods and services; and affective nurturance (Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment, 1994b).

Indian

Includes all Indian people and is not necessarily limited to those who fall within the strict meaning of the federal government's Indian Act. Many persons may consider themselves to be of Indian ancestry, but federal definitions limit the number of persons able to claim legal status as an Indian (adapted from Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment, 1994b).

Human Services

Education, health, mental health, social, justice, recreation, culture, and housing services that are provided within or outside of school by community or government agencies that contribute to the well-being of students and their families.

Integrated Services

Integrated Services use collaborative processes to planning to develop new ways of delivering services that are more coordinated, comprehensive, and responsive in addressing the complex and diverse needs of students and families at risk.

Integration

Defining and dealing with the whole rather than the parts. It means ensuring consistency of principles, goals, objectives, strategies, and actions, and combining products or services into a whole (Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment, 1994b).

Métis

Refers to those who descended from the historic Métis community in Western Canada or to persons of Indian and Métis ancestry who identify themselves as Métis.

Participation

The people involved in or impacted by an issue or initiative have a share in the planning and the outcome (Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment, 1994b).

Partnership

Partnership means a shared commitment to pursue agreed-upon goals jointly and in a coordinated manner. Joint planning and shared decision-making are characteristics of an effective partnership (Government of Saskatchewan, 1994a).

Planning

A process by which direction, goals, strategies, targets, and actions are set (Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment, 1994b).

Policy

A definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions. A policy is a set of strategies designed to achieve a desired state of affairs (specific objectives). It is a concrete expression of values, which involves the distribution of resources and power. A policy has three key components: objectives, strategies, and outcomes.

Poverty

According to Statistics Canada, the after tax low-income cut-offs are measured as the point at which poor families devote an above-average proportion (56%) of their limited income to the basic necessities of food, clothing, and shelter. (Statistics Canada, 1993).

Prevention

Prevention refers to the avoidance of disadvantage, illness, injury, disability, neglect, and abuse and their consequences.

F

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Recycled paper

Building Communities of Hope:

Best Practices for Meeting the Learning Needs of At Risk and Indian and Métis Students

IMPLEMENTATION HANDBOOK

January 1997

RC 021676

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Introduction: Building Communities of Hope

Community Schools began in Saskatchewan in 1980. Since that time, they have proven to be highly effective at meeting the educational needs of at risk and Indian and Métis children in the inner cities of Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert. In 1996, in response to a growing need, the Saskatchewan Community Schools Program was revitalized and expanded. *Building Communities of Hope: Best Practices for Meeting the Learning Needs of At Risk and Indian and Métis Students, Community Schools Policy and Conceptual Framework* was released, providing a renewed vision, as well as policies, principles and strategies for the expanded program.

Within this renewed framework, a number of additional schools were designated for Community School status in Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert and North Battleford. Designation was based on the demographic, social and economic factors affecting students and their families. School divisions and Community Schools receiving provincial funding commit themselves to implementing the "best practices framework" described in the *Policy and Conceptual Framework*.

The purpose of this *Implementation Handbook* is to assist in the implementation process and to provide ongoing support for the future operation of Community Schools. It is designed to assist all Community Schools as they work to implement all elements of the best practices framework.

For the Community Schools that were part of the original program, implementation of the renewed model will be an opportunity to take a fresh look at themselves, to reassess their role in the community, and to fine-tune their operations. For schools that have been newly-designated, implementation will be an exciting process involving a closer relationship with the community, modifications to the learning program, and the creation of new supports for both students and teachers.

The framework of best practices outlined in the renewed Community Schools framework is not limited to designated Community Schools. Other schools and school divisions seeking to meet the needs of their at risk and Indian and

Métis students may also choose to implement the model.

This Implementation Handbook is intended to be a source of ideas for school boards, principals, school staff members, Community School Councils, Community School coordinators and teacher associates. It offers suggestions to support the implementation of each aspect of the new Community School model.

> Throughout this document, you will find references to the "*Best Practices Framework*". This shortened name has been used to avoid repetition of the longer name: *Building Communities of Hope: Best Practices for Meeting the Learning Needs of At-Risk and Indian and Metis Students, Community Schools Policy and Conceptual Framework*.

A. *Community Schools Best Practices Framework: At a Glance*

Vision:

Saskatchewan Community Schools are centres of learning and hope for their communities. They incorporate a comprehensive range of best educational practices for meeting the diverse learning needs of at risk and Indian and Métis students. They provide a responsive, inclusive, culturally affirming and academically challenging learning program and environment and are effective in addressing the challenges of the communities they serve. As hubs for a network of community organizations and activities, they use collaborative approaches to foster the development and well-being of the entire community.

Issues and Challenges:

- Meeting the learning needs of growing numbers of students at risk;
- Responding to the education needs of Indian and Métis students;
- Establishing shared decision-making opportunities for Indian and Métis Peoples; and,
- Enhancing parent and community involvement and encouraging shared responsibility.

Goals:

- Student learning and success;
- A high quality education program;
- Shared responsibility;
- Comprehensive, responsive services;
- Enhanced participation in and management of public education by Indian and Métis peoples;
- Community empowerment;
- Equity and cultural harmony; and,
- Leadership in educational innovation.

Principles:

- Educational excellence;
- Cooperation and openness;
- Equity and respect for diversity;
- Preventive and comprehensive approaches;
- Empowerment; and,
- Accountability.

Strategies:

- Development of a relevant, responsive learning program;
- Collaboration and partnerships;
- Integrated planning and service delivery;
- Community development;
- Leadership development and capacity-building;
- School staff selection and development;
- A process of planning, evaluation and, renewal; and
- Effective use of resources.

Elements of the Community School Plan:

- The Learning Program
- Parent and Community Involvement
- Integrated Services
- Community Development
- School Effectiveness
- Staff Team
- School Culture and Climate
- Process for Ongoing Renewal
- Community School Council

The Community School Framework

The following illustration depicts the components within the Community School framework. Taken together, these components provide the comprehensive range of supports and approaches proven to meet the needs of at risk and Indian and Métis students.

Recognizing that every school and community is unique, with different needs, priorities and resources, this framework provides the basis upon which schools will develop their own programs to meet their specific needs and objectives.

COMMUNITY
SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS
The Learning Program
- Early intervention programming
- Elementary and middle years academic program
- Retention, re-entry, transition to high school programming
- Adult & community education programming
(Focus on culturally affirming programming)
COMMUNITY SCHOOL COUNCIL
STAFF TEAM
SUPPORT SERVICES
SUPPORT SERVICES
Student
Community Development
- Creating safe, stable and healthy communities
- Supportive community social and economic initiatives
Integrated Services
- Integrated education, health, social, justice, recreation, cultural services
- Collaboration and shared responsibility
- Effective use of resources
Parent and Community Involvement
- Parent/community involvement in learning
- Parent/community partnerships
- Leadership development
- Shared use of facilities
PROCESS FOR ONGOING RENEWAL AND COMMUNITY SCHOOL PLAN
AFFIRMING SCHOOL CULTURE AND CLIMATE
COMMUNITY

Explanation of the Illustration

In the Community School Framework, the student is at the centre surrounded by the four key components of the school program:

- the learning program,
- parent and community involvement,
- integrated services, and
- community development.

These components are planned and evaluated by the school staff and the Community School Council. They are supported by school effectiveness strategies that include the development of a supportive an affirming school culture and climate, and management of a dynamic process for ongoing renewal.

The school is the centre of its community and draws on resources and supports from the community.

What's New About the "New" Best Practices Framework

There are a number of ways that the new *Best Practices Framework* differs from the original Program. Some have to do with amount of emphasis and others involve clarification of roles. These include:

1. increased emphasis on a **comprehensive**, holistic approach to children at risk, using effectively all the resources of the school, the community, families and related agencies;

2. focus on a culturally-affirming and innovative Learning Program developed to meet the needs of at risk children;

3. greater emphasis on community development;

4. provision of integrated social, health, justice and other services;

5. increased emphasis on annual program planning involving all members of the Community School to determine objectives (on the basis of a needs assessment), establish programs to achieve these goals, and evaluate outcomes;

6. emphasis on early intervention prekindergarten programming for three- and four-year-olds at risk;

7. broadened definition of the Community School Council in terms of:
   - membership,
   - responsibilities, and,
   - involvement in the school;

8. increased professional role for the Community School Coordinator with a corresponding increase in responsibilities. (Salary allocation is higher to reflect these changes);

9. heightened emphasis on accountability, evaluation, and reporting;

10. more equitable funding formula; and,

11. greater emphasis on shared responsibility with participating school divisions.

Steps and Processes in Implementing the Community Schools Best Practices Framework

Taken together, the comprehensive range of supports and best practices included in the Community Schools *Best Practices Framework* have proven to be the most effective means of addressing the complex needs of at risk students and of removing barriers to their learning. Any one of these elements alone or as part of a piecemeal approach has limited chance of success. (Saskatchewan Education, 1996)

In implementing the framework, care must be taken to be sure that **all** parts of the elements are implemented effectively. While there is much to be done, it cannot all happen at once. This guide will help you to consider carefully and to plan the implementation of the framework as a whole. Depending on your school and community, you may have already begun some of the steps; they may happen in a different order; or more than one step may happen at the same time. Generally, however, the steps and processes will include:

1. establishing an interim planning team;

2. building staff understanding and commitment;

3. building school/community understanding and commitment;

4. establishing the Community School Council and executive;

5. developing the Community School Plan;

6. implementing and evaluating the Community School Plan;

7. preparing necessary reports; and,

8. maintaining the ongoing cycle of program renewal as outlined on page 19 of the *Best Practices Framework*.

B. Getting Started

Planning Team

While the Community School Council will play a big role in the planning and implementation of the *Best Practices Framework*, you will need a group to get the ball rolling. When forming your planning team, keep in mind that the earlier people are involved in planning, the more committed they will be to the Community School. Form a small diverse group including school division personnel, principal, teachers, students, parents and community members. Try to make this group representative of your school community. This group will guide the process until the Community School Council is in place.

Building Understanding and Commitment

Creating a successful Community School will require the interest and commitment of all involved. This commitment will need to start with the school staff and spread to the students, parents and community members. Ideas for building staff commitment are addressed in Section C, *In the School* (page 10).

Spreading the News

As a group, plan how you will inform the staff, students, parents and community that you are now a Community School and what this means for them. You may want to use a number of approaches to reach everyone. Identify the groups that need to be involved and plan how you can best reach each of them. You may wish to create a plan using a chart similar to the following:

Group	Information Strategy	Who's Responsible	Date
Example: Parents	• Notes home with students	George	October 1
	• Home visits	Mary and Committee	October-December
	• Public Meeting		
	• Newsletter	Sue and Committee Philip	October 15 October

Tips for Spreading the News

- Hold an assembly and explain to students what being a Community School is all about, what differences they may see and how they can expect to be involved.

- Hold a public meeting. If you feel it would help attendance, hold the meeting in conjunction with a potluck supper, family fun night, etc. Ensure there is child care provided during the meeting.

- Send notes home with students stating that your school is now a Community School and a brief outline of what that means.

- Include announcements in your newsletter

- Get a spot on a community television or radio station

- Visit students' homes and talk to parents about the Community School concept.

- Send post cards to local businesses, community groups, churches, human service organizations.

- Hold an Open House and involve students in explaining to parents and community members what a Community School is.

- Ensure that the telephone is always answered "_____ Community School"

- Make public presentations to service clubs, business groups, etc.

- Have students create a mural-sized poster welcoming visitors to "_____ Community School".

If you decide to hold a public meeting, the following outline may prove helpful:

Outline for a Public Information Meeting

Objectives:

- to provide students, parents, community members, staff and students with information about the Community School *Best Practices Framework*; and,
- to give students, parents, community members and staff an opportunity to talk about the benefits of becoming a Community School and to express their concerns about the changes which will occur.

Time: 2 - 2 1/2 hours

Materials:

- Sufficient copies of the handout *Community Schools: A Summary* found in Appendix A of this document.
- Flip chart and markers.
- Overhead projector and transparencies, if you wish.

Meeting Leadership:

If possible, have more than one leader for the meeting including a member of the school staff as well as a parent or a community member.

Process:

1. Distribute the handout *Community Schools: A Summary* to workshop participants.
2. Describe the components of the Community School *Best Practices Framework*.
3. Have participants discuss any concerns they may have. You may wish to do this by asking participants to break into groups of 4 or 5 and then report back to the larger group. You may wish to talk with members of your community to find out if this is an appropriate approach. If you have a large Indian and Métis population, traditional ways of communicating such as a talking circle may be more comfortable.
4. Note several of the most common concerns and brainstorm/discuss how participants' concerns may be considered and overcome as the Community School Plan moves forward.
5. Be sure that everyone is aware of the role and make-up of the Community School Council. Set a date for the next public meeting where the formation of the Council will be discussed.

C. *In the School*

Successful implementation of the Community School Council requires the commitment of all involved with the school. While the principal, community school coordinator and one or two teachers will be ex-officio members of the Community School Council **executive**, all staff are members of the Council. The commitment of the school staff is key to the success of the Community School.

The Staff Team -- Changing Roles

Roles for the principal, teachers, Community School coordinator, teacher associates, nutrition coordinator and support staff are outlined in detail in the *Best Practices Framework* (pages 21 - 27). In reading the roles and responsibilities which have been outlined, you may find that you are already achieving many of them. However, you may also find roles and responsibilities that you had not considered before. Expanding or changing your role to support the full implementation of a Community School may require some self-reflection and greater understanding of the framework.

It is important to recognize that all the parts of the Community School Framework support one another. The staff team, led by the principal, is the key element that holds the school and its program together. The creation of a cohesive, supportive staff team including the principal, teachers, community school coordinator, teacher associates, nutrition coordinator and support staff is critical, therefore, to the effectiveness of the program. Building such a team will require team members to examine their individual roles within the team and to determine how they can support other members and the implementation of the framework.

The following workshop is intended to build staff understanding and commitment to the Community School framework. It also provides an opportunity for all members of the team to examine past and present roles and to look at how they can support one another in implementing the framework.

Workshop Outline -- Building Understanding and Commitment

Objectives:

- to give school staff an opportunity to talk about the benefits of becoming a Community School and to express their concerns about the changes which will occur;
- to build commitment among staff to the Community School framework;
- to encourage staff to examine their past and present roles; and
- to build a strong cohesive staff team.

Time:

4 - 5 hours.

Materials:

- Sufficient copies of the *Best Practices Framework* for all participants (if possible, ensure that all participants have the opportunity to read this document in advance.
- Flip chart.
- Index cards.

If you wish, you may break this workshop into two shorter workshops by breaking after step #5. However, some of the momentum may be lost.

Process:

1. Distribute the *Best Practices Framework* to participants, if they have not already received it.
2. Review the components of the Community School framework.
3. The staff will recognize that becoming a Community School has many benefits, however they may also have worries or concerns about what it might mean for them and their students. The best way to deal with these concerns is to bring them out in the open, assess their validity and start identifying ways to overcome them.
4. Ask staff to identify the benefits of becoming a Community School. (If the group is small, have a brainstorming session with the whole group. If the group is large, ask participants to divide into smaller groups of three or four and then to report back to the whole group.) List these benefits on a flip chart. You may wish to save this flip chart to hang in the staff room. Benefits that participants identify might include:
    - more human and financial resources for the school (more money, more staff, more volunteers);
    - opportunities for teachers to develop new skills that help them grow personally and give them more job opportunities;

- the potential to make children's lives better; and,
- creation of a few more jobs in our community.

(Alternate method: have participants record ideas on cards and then group similar ideas.)

5. Have staff carefully review their individual role and working in groups of four or five identify what is new about their role and what is unchanged. Then have groups share their discussions with the total group. (You may wish to use index cards for this exercise and then when the total group is together, post the index cards in two groups -- "what's new" and "what's the same".

6. Give each participant 3 cards and have them identify three things that excite them about their role in the community school. Then group participants in groups of three to share the information on their cards. In these groups they should eliminate any duplication of ideas and maintain the cards that present different ideas. Repeat the exercise in groups of six. In the total group, begin with one group of six and have them stick their cards up on the wall, well separated from one another. Then have each group stick their cards up, however, they should group any of their cards that are similar to those of the previous group. From this you will end up with several themes describing what is exciting about being in a Community School.

7. Give each participant 3 cards and have them identify what concerns them about their role, or where they feel they will need additional support or training. Follow the same procedure as in #6. However, once you have identified the common themes, you will use these common themes in the next exercise.

8. Use one piece of flip chart to record each of the common themes identified in #7 and give each participant a marker. Give them some time to write their names on the flip charts wherever they feel they can provide support to other members of the staff team because of their identified role and their past experience. They might also wish to identify how that support could be provided, ie: inservice, mentoring, classroom presentations, etc.

   For example, a concern might be: "lack of knowledge of Aboriginal cultures and traditions". A teacher associate who may be of Aboriginal ancestry may be able to provide support and training to other members of the staff.

   Another example might be concern about effective involvement of parents and community members. The Community School coordinator will be able to identify how he or she can support the teachers in this component. Likewise, teachers will be able to identify ways that they can support the coordinator by making opportunities for parent and community involvement in their classroom.

   When this process is complete, participants will recognize the wealth of expertise and support within their own staff team. They will also recognize how they can support each other in the implementation of the *Best Practices Framework*. They may also identify areas where they will require outside support and training.

9. Using the information discovered in #8, devise a training plan. Staff may also identify individual training needs which they may wish to pursue on their own through mentoring, Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation short courses, University classes, or other means.

D. The Community School Council

The Community School Council is the formal link between school and community. It takes an active role in the development and implementation of the Community School plan and oversees the Community School program according to the plan.

The Community School Council plays a strong role both within the school and in the community. Within the school, it concerns itself with substantive matters such as: policy on determining priorities, school goals, rules and regulations and recommending criteria for staffing. In the community, the Council will play a leadership role, both initiating and participating in community-based actions to improve the lives and well-being of its students.

The responsibilities of the Council can be categorized into seven key areas including:

- planning;
- advising on and supporting the learning program;
- evaluating and collecting data;
- encouraging parent involvement and community partnerships;
- initiating and participating in community development;
- facilitating integrated services; and,
- developing criteria for staffing appointments.

(The *Best Practices Framework* provides a complete description of the roles and responsibilities of the Community School Council on pages 21 - 23.)

1. Composition and Selection

Every parent with a child in a Community School is a member of the Community School Council. In addition, the principal, teachers, students and Community School staff are represented. Members of the community are an important component of the Council, particularly representatives of the human service, Indian-Métis and other agencies who work closely with the Community School. Each Council has an executive that handles administrative matters and implements the decisions of the entire Council.

The executive of the Community School Council includes

Tips for Building an Executive that is Representative of the Community

- *Staff and executive members may identify members of the Council who show an interest and encourage them to participate as executive members. In some instances, it may be necessary to assist potential members in gaining confidence and skills needed to participate.*
- *Create working committees that include people other than the executive to develop potential executive members and to develop their interest and commitment in the community school.*

- *Talk to community leaders about people whom they know that would make an effective contribution to the council.*
- *Study the social and economic makeup of your community and ensure that all groups are represented.*
- *Make Council meetings inviting and ensure that all members have opportunity to participate in a manner that is comfortable to them.*

representation from:

- parents;
- students;
- teachers;
- teacher associates;
- community;

as well as:
- the principal; and,
- the Community School coordinator.

It is important that the executive of the Community School Council be established early so that it can play an active role in developing the Community School plan, hiring staff and creating links with the community. The Community School Council will decide how the executive is selected. While some groups use general elections at a membership meeting, this may not be the best way for your council to choose an executive that reflects the socio-economic and cultural makeup of the school and community. In building the executive, it is important to recall some of the key goals of community schools including:
- shared responsibility;
- enhanced participation in public education by Indian and Métis peoples;
- community empowerment; and,
- equity and cultural harmony.

These goals are supported by the principles of:
- cooperation and openness;
- equity: respect for diversity and cultural responsiveness; and,
- empowerment.

(For a complete listing and description of goals and principles refer to pages 9 - 11 of the *Best Practices Framework*.)

2. *Roles and Responsibilities of Executive Members*

Your Council may decide upon other roles for the executive of the Council; however, the following is a guide.

The **Chairperson** will:
- conduct meetings of the Council and executive;

- ensure that all members have input to discussion and decisions;
- prepare meeting agendas in consultation with the principal and coordinator and be open to suggestions from members of the Council;
- oversee operations of the Council; and,
- act as spokesperson for the Council.

The **Vice-Chairperson** will:
- support the chairperson in his/her duties, taking over when the chair is unable to attend;
- perform responsibilities assigned by the chairperson; and,
- normally become the chairperson in the following year.

The **Secretary** will:
- take minutes at Council and executive meetings;
- receive and send correspondence on behalf of the Council;
- take charge of any official records of the Council;
- maintain a membership list of all members of the executive and Council; and,
- ensure that appropriate notice is given for all meetings of the Council and executive.

The **Treasurer** will:
- chair any meetings of the finance committee;
- be responsible for bank accounts and deposits;
- together with another member of the executive, sign cheques on behalf of the Council;
- use a bookkeeping system to account for the funds of the Council; and,
- prepare financial reports for meetings of the executive and the Council.

The **Representatives of Parents, Teachers, Teacher Associates, Students, etc.** will:
- understand and communicate the views of their group accurately;
- communicate, on an ongoing basis, the activities of the executive to their peer group;
- take an active part in the activities of the Council; and,
- serve on committees as needed by the Council.

3. Choosing a Decision-Making Model

There are a number of ways groups can make decisions. Members of the Council and executive will want to choose

Consensus Decision Making

Why use consensus decision-making?
- *The process involves everyone and incorporates all ideas.*
- *It generates commitment to action and to each other.*
- *It helps teams work together in a positive way to develop mutual trust and understanding.*
- *It helps identify areas of agreement.*
- *It facilitates discussion.*
- *It provides an opportunity to explore how each person feels about an issue -- important information when designing an eventual action plan.*

Consensus process:
- *State the problem clearly.*
- *Brainstorm.*
- *Discuss each item. Clarify. Don't jump to solutions.*
- *Categorize, narrow the focus, eliminate items, modify.*
- *Select final statements. Use consensus voting.*

Rules of consensus seeking:

- *No averaging.*
- *No horse-trading.*
- *No majority rule.*
- *No excluding anyone.*
- *No giving up.*

Consensus voting:

- *How many are all for it -- believe in it so much, they could be leaders on the issue.*
- *How many are all for it -- will lend support.*
- *How many need to talk about the issue further.*
- *How many are not sure, but trust the opinion of the group.*

The first person to say no to the proposal must give an alternative.

(Alberta Education et al., 1995)

ways that work best for them. The executive may use a different manner of making decisions for its meetings than that which is used by the whole Council.

A decision-making model should be chosen by the executive at its first meeting. If it is found that the chosen model is not working well, the executive may wish to select a different model. In fact, in some cases, you may find that different issues require different models of decision-making.

Two common ways of making decisions are:

Type of Decision-Making	Advantages	Disadvantages
Majority Vote Model: The issue is discussed and a vote is taken. The majority vote decides the issue.	• Can be a quick and efficient way to decide a clear cut issue. • Some opportunity for modification during discussion. If formal motions and amendments are used, the process can become very confusing. • Clear decision is made.	• Can create a "win-lose" situation where some participants are dissatisfied. • Can negatively affect team-building.
Consensus Building Model: Consensus does not necessarily mean that all parties agree, but that all can live with a decision for the sake of the group's ability to move forward. Consensus will almost always involve compromise and can release a group to move beyond individual wants to determining and pursuing shared needs.	• ensures all council members have an effective voice; • builds on differing perspectives and values; • allows for flexibility in arriving at solutions; • can build respect for differing values and viewpoints; • can lead to better informed, more creative, balanced and enduring decisions; • ensures the final decision has the support of the entire school council; and • if unsuccessful, it allows for a decision to be made by voting.	• Can be time-consuming.

4. *Communication Skills and Practices*

Effective communication is key to the successful operation of the Council. Good communication begins with each individual. In order for your school council to function effectively, members will need to communicate their ideas and views with others. This will require that the Council develop a climate of open, honest communication where everyone feels their views are valued.

As well as practising individual communication skills, the Council will need to state communication strategies and practices clearly so that they foster respect and trust. Such practices might include:

- publicizing meetings well in advance;
- providing a chance for people to state their concerns at meetings (e.g. an Issues and Concerns session at meetings) and privately to leaders;
- receiving criticism in a non-defensive manner (giving a person a chance to "vent" can often diffuse a situation);
- encouraging "solution seeking" not just complaint-oriented sessions;
- being respectful of cultural differences and perspectives;
- conducting membership surveys; and,
- publishing a newsletter to let the membership know what the Council is doing and whom to contact.

Aside from communication with students, parents and community members, effective communication practices will need to be developed with:

- **Other Schools in the Community and in the Division**:
  As a flagship school in the division, the Community School Council will want to set up communication links with other schools in the neighbourhood to share information and ideas.

- **Community Organizations and Groups**:
  Newsletters, letters or meetings on a scheduled basis can help to keep groups such as Social Services, First Nation bands, and other community groups informed about the Council's plans and activities.

Group Dynamics and Team Building

Groups behave in their own, often perplexing fashion. This behaviour is referred to as group dynamics or group process. Some people have spent a lifetime studying group dynamics. They have found that, while perplexing to many of us, groups behave in a somewhat predictable fashion. Four major stages often occur in group dynamics (Hergert, Phlegar, Perez-Selles, 1991):

1. *Forming: getting to know one another and the issues in a polite and guarded way.*
2. *Storming: beginning to air differences and sorting out difficulties. Confrontations may occur and some people may opt out of the group.*
3. *Norming: getting organized. The group develops procedures, acquires skills, and feels comfortable confronting issues. Members give feedback in an open and constructive manner.*
4. *Performing: beginning to work together effectively to accomplish objectives.*

You may recognize these stages in your group.

Understanding group dynamics will help your council overcome some of the frustration and confusion which may result in its first year of existence. Each stage is important. Some groups may move quickly throughout, others may never pass storming, unable to resolve differences and dissolve.

Communication skills are important at all stages, but imperative during storming. An open and respectful communication climate, using conflict resolution procedures, will help see your Council on to the next stage of development.

- **School Division**:
  It will be important to establish a timely and consistent communication procedures with the school division. This may mean sharing meeting minutes and monthly reports, or having a local school division representative at all meetings to share information from the school division board and to take back Council questions and suggestions.

Eight important individual communication skills are:

1. Listen to others, and to yourself.
2. Carefully examine the other person's point of view.
3. Look, act and be interested.
4. Be aware of nonverbal behaviour such as body language.
5. Don't interrupt.
6. If you must interrupt, speak affirmatively.
7. Rephrase what the other person has said.
8. When you speak, speak clearly and only to the point being discussed. (If you have a number of points to make, jot them down ahead of time to help keep you focused.)

"You never know, that other opinion may be closer to your own than you thought!"

(Alberta Home and School Council's Association (1995).

5. *Conflict Resolution*

Differences of opinion happen. You can expect that there will be conflict. In times of changing roles and relationships, conflict can occur more frequently.

The Council and executive will need a formal conflict resolution procedure (also called dispute resolution procedure or appeals procedure) for occasions when someone disagrees with a decision or action that has been taken. Your board of education may have a conflict resolution policy in place. The Council may wish to coordinate its policy with that of its school division.

Conflict Resolution Guidelines

Any conflict resolution procedure must:

- put the interests and welfare of children above all other issues;
- be structured to ensure that both parties have a fair opportunity to present their point of view; and,
- be as simple and inexpensive to administer as possible.

Procedures should be developed with input from the school community and should be reviewed periodically to ensure people are aware of their existence and continue to consider them appropriate.

Steps to Resolve Conflict

The following steps may be helpful in resolving conflict:

1. **Build a collaborative climate**: The executive establishes a collaborative climate so that differences in opinion can be dealt with in an open manner and everyone's views are valued. All members should agree to:
   - **respect** the perspective of others,
   - **listen** to what others have to say,
   - **prepare** to problem solve.

2. **Be prepared**: If differences of opinion cannot be worked out, have a procedure in place. Conflict resolution procedures may include the use of:

   - a mediator to develop a solution that will be satisfactory to both sides;
   - a jointly agreed-upon panel to make a recommendation or a binding decision; or,
   - a plan to refer a dispute to school administrators or the board of education.

3. **Identify the problem**: Only by clearly defining the problem can a group begin to resolve it and the underlying issues. Disputes usually occur because of disagreements on:

   - facts,
   - resources,
   - perceptions,
   - values and beliefs, or,
   - styles.

What's Good and What's Bad About Conflict?

The good: Conflict can:

- *clarify an issue*
- *open new issues*
- *increase involvement of members*
- *encourage growth*
- *create more spontaneous communication*
- *strengthen relationships when it is successfully resolved*

The bad: Conflict can:

- *divert energy from the task at hand and decrease productivity*
- *destroy morale*
- *polarize individuals and groups*
- *deepen differences*
- *obstruct cooperative action*
- *produce irresponsible behaviour*
- *create suspicion and distrust*

(Alberta Education et al, 1996)

Defining the problem involves: clearly stating views, listening to others, trying to understand their views, and asking questions to clarify. At this stage participants should avoid giving advice or judgements.

Deal with emotions and feelings of distrust before moving on from this stage.

4. **Brainstorm and evaluate options and solutions**: by working together to find a solution to the problem, individuals and groups can create a win-win situation.

5. **Create an action plan**: the plan should identify timelines, who is responsible for what actions, and who will follow up. (Adapted from Alberta Education et al, 1995)

6. *Calling and Holding Meetings: The Basics*

Meetings are a way to discuss issues and make decisions with the benefit of the diverse thoughts and views of the members. In order to take advantage of this benefit, meetings take some planning and effective management to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to be heard with efficient use of time.

Planning the executive meeting is usually the responsibility of the chairperson. Some of the elements in planning a meeting include:

- **Publicize the Meeting**

  This can be done in community calendars, school newsletters, the newspaper, community announcements in the media, posters and personal telephone calls. Make sure you give everyone enough notice (two weeks if possible). Establishing a set meeting day, time and location will help people remember.

- **Arrange the Room**

  How the room is arranged can add to the success of a meeting. You may wish to set the room up in a round-table style rather than a head-table style (where the chairperson and other officers are at the front of the room facing the members).

Make sure there is enough seating for everyone and no one feels on the "outside".

Arrange for equipment and supplies prior to the meeting day.

- **Establish the Agenda**

The agenda should clearly outline what will be dealt with at the meeting. Having a standard, yet flexible agenda will help save time preparing for meetings. A standard agenda could include general topic headlines such as:

- additions or changes to the agenda;
- minutes and items for discussion from the last meeting;
- topics and items from past meeting that were not concluded;
- correspondence;
- committee reports;
- principal and staff report(s);
- school division report;
- new topics/issues/concerns; and,
- date, time, location and agenda items for the next meeting.

The chairperson also takes the length of the meeting into account when preparing an agenda.

A sample agenda has been included in Appendix B.

- **Choose a Consistent Meeting Style**

Your Council needs to decide upon a meeting style that is efficient yet enhances the participation of all members. A more informal style may make people feel comfortable and encourage discussion. Occasionally, a more formal style may be necessary.

- **Record the Minutes**

Someone assumes responsibility for recording the proceedings of the meeting. The same person can be assigned this task for each meeting or it can be handled on a rotating basis.

The major decisions of the meeting need to be recorded. Minutes should be brief and clear. The chart format

included in Appendix B makes it easy to record only the key points of the discussion and major decisions made.

- **Chair the Meeting**

  A chairperson is usually elected for a specific term (e.g. 1 year). However, an organization may feel that it is more appropriate to have the chair rotate (e.g. change every 3 months). This divides the workload up among a number of people, and may overcome anxiety on the part of members not comfortable or familiar with the role of chairperson.

  While all participants have a role in making a meeting effective, the chairperson has one of the largest roles. The chairperson does most of the planning for the meeting, establishes a climate of respect and trust, balances the need to keep the meeting relatively brief (2 hours) yet lets everyone have their say, resolves conflict, and recognizes all who have contributed.

- **Evaluate the Meeting**

  To assist in planning your meetings and to increase participation, you may wish to include an evaluation time at the end of each meeting. This evaluation will give members an opportunity to provide feedback on the meeting and make suggestions for more effective meetings.

  You may wish to have a general discussion of how the meeting went or you may wish to break the group into groups of 4-5 participants to discuss what they liked or disliked, changes they would like to see at the next meeting, how they liked the facility, whether or not they felt they had enough opportunity to participate, etc.

  Some groups like to use evaluation forms. The drawback to this style of evaluation is that often people see the form as extra work. Others may have difficulty reading and writing. The evaluation form should be simple (not more than one page) and carefully worded so that the Community School Council can use it to improve meetings.

An example of an meeting evaluation form is included in Appendix B.

Chairing Meetings

While a meeting's formality depends upon the chairperson, the preference of the group, the size of the group and the reason for the meeting, here are some suggestions for chairing an orderly meeting so that everyone is able to share their views.

- *ensure that only one person at a time is speaking;*
- *discuss only one subject at a time;*
- *call people by name to let them know it is their turn to speak;*
- *let everyone who wishes to make comments on an issue do so once before someone speaks to the issue for a second time;*
- *keep the meeting moving and ensure no one dominates the discussion;*
- *adopt a principle that every member has equal rights; and,*
- *move an item to the next meeting if there is not enough time to discuss it fully at the meeting, if the members agree.*

(Adapted from Alberta Education et al., 1995)

7. Committees

By using committees, the Council can involve more people in the decision making and divide up the workload. If operated effectively, committees can make the Council more productive and its decisions more representative of the school community.

The Council may have longer term committees (called standing committees) such as the community development committee, fund raising committee, or parent volunteer committee, and shorter term committees (called ad hoc committees) such as a logo design committee.

Forming and Operating Effective Committees

Some hints for forming and operating effective committees:

- Ensure the committee is clear on its role and tasks, and is aware of the larger goals of the Community School Council. The Council should consider written job descriptions/responsibilities for each committee.

- Aim for broad representation. This is where the Council can involve more parents, teachers and community members who want to participate in the council, but do not have the time to take on an executive role.

- Use committees as a leadership training ground. Potential leaders may begin as committee members, gain confidence in their skills and increase their dedication to the School Council.

- Establish reporting procedures. Committees are advisory arms of the School Council, therefore the Council now must know, and approve of, what the committees are doing. The committee chairperson is the Council's link to the committee.

- Ensure committees set realistic objectives and tasks. Committees may, in their initial enthusiasm, take on too much. The Council should endeavour to prevent volunteer burn-out and frustration by suggesting committees decide which objectives and tasks are the most important and which can wait, then concentrate on those which are most important.

Saying Thank You

- The establishment of a new organization is not easy work. Supporting each other and all those who volunteer on behalf of the Community School Council is important.

- It is good practice to establish a time during each meeting to acknowledge the people who have worked on projects and activities as well as a general thank you to all those who volunteered in Council programs. This can abe a simple thank you from the chairperson or can be a handout for the membership.

- More formal recognition can be given throughout the year as well. Certificates or "Volunteer of the Month" awards or newsletter and newspaper articles are some suggestions for those who have made an extra-ordinary contribution.

Making Meetings Fun

Yes, it can be done! With a little humour, and a personal touch, meetings can be productive and enjoyable.

Some suggestions are:

- surprise birthday/special day greeting for members (if you can find out!)
- announcements about special accomplishments,
- refreshments and food at each meeting,
- special cultural displays,
- presentations and food,
- brief group activities that are fun and allow people to get to know each other.

Keep Them Coming Back: Encouraging Ongoing Involvement

A Community School Council requires a broad range of parent and community participation to be successful. In order to keep parents and community members coming back to meetings they will have to see a **benefit to their participation** and as well as **results**. They also will not appreciate wasting their time. Therefore meetings have to be efficient and action oriented.

Some ideas to keep members involved in Community School Council meetings are:

- schedule guest speakers, presentations, videos;
- be aware of members' skills and invite parents and community members to assist the Council (e.g. elders to talk about First Nation traditions, a lawyer to write bylaws, an artist to develop a logo);
- provide an opportunity for members to learn something new;
- send personal invitations, telephone, or make home visits;
- recognize contributions and say thank you;
- provide babysitting or a supervised play area for children; and,
- use committees effectively.

Outline for the First Meeting of the Council

Objectives:

- To update parents, students, community members and staff on the implementation of the Community School policy and conceptual framework.
- To determine a decision-making process that is acceptable to all members of the Council.
- To determine how the Community School Council executive will be selected.

Time: 1 hour (2 hours if there is a guest speaker or other activity)

Materials:

Flip chart or Black Board
Overhead Projector
Overhead Transparencies
Handouts

Meeting Leadership

This meeting will be led by the planning team. Following this meeting, the planning team will turn over the planning job to the executive of the Community School Council. (Some members such as the principal and Community School coordinator will remain the same.)

Process:

1. Call to Order and Welcome.
2. Review Agenda and ask for any additions or other changes.
3. Update:

   Share with the group any new developments to date.

   If many of the group did not attend the informational meeting you may wish to provide an overview of the Community School program and how it works.

4. Decision-making model.

   Describe the two styles of decision-making models (see page 16) and have the groups decide which model they would prefer to use. (You may wish to provide a handout or use an overhead projector to allow participants to read as well as hear about the two styles.) **Note: The Council may decide to use a combination of the two decision-making styles.**

5. Decide as a group how the executive will be selected. Depending on the method chosen, you may wish to form a committee to seek out members for the executive. The membership of the executive will be formalized at the next meeting.

(While it is important to involve everyone in decisions about how decisions will be made and how the executive will be selected, participants may feel that little has been accomplished. It would be a good idea to have a guest speaker, or some other entertainment to extend and add value to this meeting.)

8. *Developing the Community School Council*

While some members of your community may be very knowledgeable about procedures for running and participating in meetings, taking part in committee work, planning functions and programs, others may have had little experience in these areas. To ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate fully, you will want to make special efforts to be inclusive, to recognize and build upon individual strengths and to value people's efforts to participate and make a contribution.

Recognize that each parent, student or community member is starting at a different place and has different goals, interests and abilities. Keep in mind that most parents are interested in their children's education and want them to succeed. However, they may have different ways of expressing that interest or may be uncomfortable in approaching or participating in activities at the school. This may be the result of a variety of factors including unpleasant past experiences, or lack of confidence in themselves.

It is important to recognize the potential within each person and provide opportunities and encouragement to develop that potential.

Executive members will need to have or to develop a basic set of skills to participate effectively. These include:

- planning,
- decision-making,
- running effective meetings,
- communications,
- bookkeeping (for the treasurer), and,
- taking minutes (for the secretary).

They will also need to have or develop a range of attitudes based on the values of the Community School program.

The executive may wish to create a plan for their own development, separate from the opportunities that may be afforded to all parents and community members.

Once the executive is in place, it may be useful for members annually to determine their own strengths, identify areas where they wish to develop additional skills, and examine the values of the Community School program in relation to their own values and attitudes.

Workshop Plan -- Executive Development

Objectives:

- To discover and value the strengths present in the executive members.
- To develop a plan for executive development.

Time: 2 hours

Materials:

- Sufficient copies of roles and responsibilities from pages 21 - 23 of the *Best Practices Framework*
- flipchart and markers
- cards

Process:

1. Discuss the roles and responsibilities of the executive of the Community School Council found on page 14 of this book and pages 21 - 23 of the *Best Practices Framework*.

2. Have participants identify the key skills and abilities needed by the executive members and write on flipchart (be sure to leave lots of space between each skill or ability).

3. Give each executive member 4 cards and have them write their name on the cards and identify four strengths they believe they bring to the executive.

4. Have participants place the cards beside the skills and abilities they identified in #2.

5. From the above exercise, participants will be able to identify where they can seek support from other executive members. They may also wish to ask those executive members to provide training to the rest of the group. In addition, they may identify areas where all members need development. At this point they may wish to identify others in the school or community who possess those skills and abilities. These people may be approached to provide training or support to the executive or they may be potential committee members.

6. Devise an executive development plan.

(Alternative Method - Use a talking circle, or facilitate a general discussion to determine the skills, strengths and attitudes required and determine how these skills and attitudes might be developed. Encourage participants to support one another by sharing their own strengths.)

E. The Community School Plan

The Community School plan is a road map, a guide for the upcoming year for the school and its community. Evaluating the success of previous plans helps to make the new plan more imaginative and realistic. This process of development, maintenance and evaluation of an action plan for the Community School is one of continuous renewal. It is primarily the responsibility of the Community School executive in cooperation with the principal, the coordinator, the teachers and teacher associate and where possible, representatives from the student body and the board of education.

There are 6 steps in developing, implementing and evaluating the Community School plan:

1. create a vision;
2. assess needs;
3. develop objectives;
4. create an action plan;
5. identify program supports; and
6. monitor and evaluate the plan.

Pages 30 - 38 of the *Best Practices Framework* provide a general overview and work sheets for the creation of a Community School plan. The following pages provide additional information and workshop ideas to help you in formulating each part of the Community School Plan.

The vision for the Community School Program is:

Saskatchewan Community Schools are centres of learning and hope for their communities. They incorporate a comprehensive range of best educational practices for meeting the diverse learning needs of at risk and Indian and Metis students. They provide a responsive, inclusive, culturally affirming and academically challenging learning program and environment and are effective in addressing the challenges of the communities they serve. As hubs for a network of community organizations and activities, they use collaborative approaches to foster the development and well-being of the entire community.

1. Create a Vision

A vision is a statement describing what you want the school to be like, what is the ideal learning community and what is the ideal achievement for students. Everyone who will be affected by the vision should be involved in creating it. There are many processes for creating a vision. You may have people who are skilled in leading visioning workshops within your school, school division or community. The following workshop has been provided to assist you in planning your vision. Once you have established the vision for your Community School, be sure that it is posted visibly and that everyone involved with the school knows what it is.

Vision Workshop

Objective:
- To involve as many people as possible, who are involved in the Community School in establishing a common vision for the school.

Time: 3 - 4 hours

Materials:
- 5" X 8" index cards and tape or sticky tack
- markers
- flip chart
- overhead projector and screen

Participants:
- parents
- students
- school staff
- community members

Process:

1. Provide a brief overview of the elements of the Community School and explain that today you will be concentrating on establishing a vision for your school.

2. Explain what a vision is and share the vision for the Community Schools program. You may wish to display the vision on an overhead projector or a large paper on the wall.

3. Explain to the group that in this workshop they will be answering the question: "What do we want our school to be like in 3 - 5 years?"

4. Ask each participant to write down or think of 5 - 6 elements of what they would like the school to be like in 3 - 5 years. Have them choose their 3 - 5 best ideas.

5. Move into groups of 2 - 3 people. Have each group discuss their ideas and then write their ideas on cards using 3 - 5 words in large block letters (one idea per card). In determining their group ideas, the groups should not throw any ideas out but merely eliminate overlap.

6. Have participants pass up their cards and as a group create groupings of ideas. Once you have grouped the ideas, have the group assign names to each grouping.

7. Assign each group (you may need to combine some groups) one grouping of cards. Have them write one or two statements of the vision based on those cards.

(Alternate Method - Steps 4 - 7: Brainstorm ideas and post on flip chart, then as a total group find commonalities and group the ideas. Ask for three volunteers to write a vision from the ideas in the groupings. Give other participants an opportunity to take a break while this writing occurs. The initial vision can be sketchy because the total group will work to refine the total vision.)

8. Write all the statements together into one vision and post either on flip chart or on an overhead projector. Give participants an opportunity to review the vision and then discuss it as a total group. The result should be a fairly cohesive vision. The group may wish to give the Council responsibility for refining the wording of the vision. Ensure all participants receive a copy of the vision.

2. *Needs Assessment*

The needs assessment is a key part of the planning process. There are several reasons for doing a needs assessment:

- it indicates how to use resources in the most effective and equitable manner;
- it helps match services with needs;
- it takes the guesswork out of planning;
- it increases accountability;
- it encourages broad-based citizen participation; and
- it raises community awareness, understanding and acceptance.

Needs assessment involves four basic steps:

- identification of needs;
- assigning priority to needs;
- identification of services, resources and strengths to address needs; and
- analysis of gaps and overlaps.

Needs Identification

To begin the needs identification, you will need to determine answers to the following questions:

- What information do you want to collect?
- Where can the information be found?
- How will you collect the information?

You may wish to begin with a public meeting to inform parents and community about the planned needs assessment and to discuss the types of information needed and where that information might be found. This may be an opportunity to solicit help in collecting the information.

- **What information do you want to collect?**

  The needs assessment will be based on the vision as well as the program components which are:

- the learning program;
- parent and community involvement;
- integrated school-linked services; and,
- community development.

- **Where can the information be found?**

  For each category of information, there will be several sources of information. It will be helpful to determine what other information about your school community already exists. You may wish to contact other schools in the neighbourhood, the school division, the health board or government departments (particularly Statistics Canada) to determine what information they have collected about your school community.

  Other information will come from the students, parents, staff and community groups and members involved in the school. Make a list of all the groups you will want to contact.

- **How will you collect the information?**

  There are a number of methods you can use to collect information on needs. Each method has its advantages and disadvantages. Different methods may work better with different groups of people. You will probably want to use a number of different methods based on the information you need and the groups of people you will contact. The following chart provides an outline of the various methods for collecting information about needs.

Tips for Designing a Questionnaire

Keep it short
Provide clear and concise instructions
Include an introduction and a thank you
Be sure that your questionnaire is attractive
Place more sensitive and more difficult questions closer to the end
Group questions by topic
Make questions easy to respond to
Ensure questions are not biased

(Adapted from Edmonton Social Planning Council, 1988)

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
Survey Survey questionnaires are constructed and mailed to participants.	• can be sent directly to those experiencing need; • provides most valid and reliable information; • flexible to cover wide range of topics; • can reach a large number of people; • least expensive/time consuming of all survey methods; • sense of privacy may encourage more frank responses.	• low rate of return -- may result in a non-representative sample; • questions may be misunderstood; • requires that respondent be literate; • requires trained personnel to design the questionnaire and to code and analyze results.
Telephone Survey/Interviews Involves administration of a survey questionnaire over the telephone. An alternate method may involve participants responding to a voice-mail system.	• less time consuming/expensive and faster than face-to-face interviews; • call-backs to attain further information are simple and inexpensive; • allows for clarification of questions and responses;	• must be relatively short; • sometimes linked with telephone solicitation; • does not include people who do not have a telephone; • may require several call backs to contact respondent.
Face to Face Survey/Interviews Involves administration of a survey questionnaire in person.	• provides more detailed, richer information; • provides opportunity to clarify questions and responses and to probe for further information; • more questions can be asked; • higher response rate than other methods; • avoids problems of illiteracy; • new issues can be uncovered through conversation.	• most expensive/time consuming method; • interviewers may bias the data; • data may be more difficult to code and analyze; • interviewers must be trained; • may be difficult to arrange interviews with some people.
Public Meeting (Workshop) Bring together a group of interested parents, staff, community members and representatives of community groups. Use a workshop format to determine community needs.	• relatively easy to arrange and inexpensive; • generates interest among citizens who may then be willing to play an active role, such as joining a program committee; • may be helpful in establishing categories of need.	• those attending the meeting may not be representative of the community; • some voices may overpower others; • some people may not feel comfortable speaking in a large group; • may raise expectations that cannot be met.

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
Focus Groups A focus group is a group interview. An experienced facilitator leads a discussion around a number of focus questions with a group of 6 - 12 people.	• smaller groups may encourage people to express their opinions more freely; • comments of participants may stimulate others to state their own point of view; • groups can be structured to include diverse or similar membership (ie: parents, students and staff or parents only).	• some people may not be comfortable in expressing themselves; • time-consuming.
Social Indicators Uses existing statistics, public records and agency reports to determine the demographic, socio-economic and geographic characteristics which relate to needs.	• provides some descriptive information about the community which may indicate areas of need; • relatively easy and inexpensive; • can provide the baseline data for a community profile.	• cannot be used alone as it requires user to make assumptions of need; • may be vague or incomplete.

A chart such as the following may be helpful in planning a needs identification exercise:

Group	Information Needed	Method	Responsibility	Timeline
Parents	• *learning program* • *parent and community involvement* • *community development* • *integrated services*	• *face-to-face interviews*	*Needs Assessment Committee*	*March / April*

When in Doubt, Start with What's Most Likely to Succeed

Start with issues in which the community is most interested. People are more willing to get involved in something they care about. Later, they may be receptive to getting involved in other issues too.

Start with issues for which there are already community resources. You can capitalize on existing programs, services and public education campaigns to amplify the impact of your activities.

"Starting easy" is not a cop-out. Once you have earned a track record of community credibility and support, you can tackle more difficult issues. (British Columbia Ministry of Health)

Assigning Priority to Needs

Once you have identified the needs of the school community you will want to determine which needs have the highest priority. Begin by developing some criteria that will help you decide which needs are the most important or which should be addressed first. Examples of criteria might include that the need:

- addresses the key components of the Community School model;
- is widely and strongly felt by the whole community or a large group; and
- is acceptable to your Council as an important issue and is something to which everyone can feel commitment.

The following chart may be helpful in organizing and assigning priority to the needs which you have identified.

Assigning Priority to Needs

Needs	Priority
The Learning Program: • • • •	
Parent and Community Involvement: • • • •	
Community Development: • • • •	
Integrated Services: • • • •	

Identification of Services, Resources and Strengths

The second part of needs assessment involves identifying the services, resources and strengths in your school, school division and community. Brainstorm a list of organizations, agencies and individuals that provide or can provide the time, skills, services, supports, money and knowledge your school can draw upon. Then contact each organization/person to collect information on their services, resources and strengths. Page 34 of the *Best Practices Framework* provides a list of the types of information you might collect.

This information can be collected through interviews, questionnaires or face-to-face meetings. You may be able to overlap this task with the needs identification by including questions about services, resources and strengths in those survey instruments.

Analysis of Gaps and Overlaps

This is the final step in the Needs Assessment. It involves matching the services, resources and strengths with identified needs. See page 34 of the *Best Practices Framework* for further information and a "Gaps and Overlaps Analysis Tool".

3. Completing the Plan -- Creating Working Groups

Creating and implementing the Community School Plan is a big job that will require the involvement and commitment of many people. You may wish to form working groups of parents, community members, students and staff to be responsible for each area of the framework. For example, one group could be responsible for the learning program, one for parent and community involvement and so on. The work of groups, however, must be coordinated and integrated in order to support the holistic nature of the Community School Program.

You may wish to hold a planning day with all of the working groups in attendance to formulate objectives and develop the action plan. The following Workshop Outline will help you in preparing for the planning day.

Workshop Plan -- The Community School Plan

Objectives:
- To determine objectives, action plans and program supports that will address key needs related to each part of the Community School framework.
- To create a coordinated Community School plan.
- To build commitment to the Community School plan.

Time: 6 hours

Materials:
- flipchart
- markers
- sufficient copies of the chart included on pages 37 and 38 of the *Best Practices Framework*
- sufficient copies of the *Gaps and Overlaps Analysis Tool*

Participants:
- working groups and any other interested people

Process:
1. Outline the tasks to be accomplished and provide some instruction in how to accomplish them.
2. Provide space for each group to begin their planning. Be sure each working group has someone who will act as a facilitator.
3. Provide each group with a copy of the *Action Plan* form on pages 37 and 38 of the *Best Practices Framework* and the completed "Gaps and Overlaps Analysis Tool". From your needs assessment, you will have identified a few key needs related to each part of the framework. The groups will use these needs as the basis of their plan.
4. Groups will formulate objectives, create an action plan and identify program supports.
5. Each group will be asked to prepare a completed copy of the *Community School Plan* form and a similar chart on flip chart that can be posted for use in coordinating the total plan.
6. Plan approximately two hours at the end of the day for the groups to share their individual plans and coordinate the total Community School Plan. This coordination is a key step in the planning process because it builds commitment to the total Community School Plan and ensures that the plan:
   - addresses the key needs,
   - does not contain overlapping programs and functions, and
   - is achievable.
7. Post all of the group planning sheets, then ask each group to share their plan. Once all groups have shared their plan, ask some key questions to start the groups thinking about how the total plan can be coordinated. Questions might include:
   - What is similar about the plans?
   - What is different?
   - Are there any program ideas that overlap?
   - Are there any key needs that have not been met?
8. Create a total coordinated Community School plan on a flip chart. Ensure that all participants get a copy of this plan after the workshop.

Alternate Method: If you cannot plan a whole day, have working groups establish the objectives and action plan and identify resources on their own. Then bring the total group together for a half day to coordinate the plan.

Tips for Writing Strong Objectives

Objectives:
are short: one sentence long;
contain an action verb;
are easy to understand; and,
describe clearly what will be done, how it will be measured and when it will be completed.

4. Setting Objectives

Objectives outline the actions that must be taken to work toward the vision. These objectives will relate to the broad objectives of each component of the learning program as identified in the *Best Practices Framework* pages 13 - 20. They will also be in agreement with the basic principles of the Community School program outlined on pages 10 and 11 of that document. You will set objectives related to each of the needs which you plan to address.

Use the SMART test when formulating objectives. Objectives are:

- **S**pecific;
- **M**easurable;
- **A**ttainable;
- **R**ealistic; and,
- **T**ime-limited.

(Adapted from Health and Welfare Canada, 1991).

5. Action Plan

The action plan turns the objectives into actions or program activities that will work toward achieving the vision. The action plan will include:

- the objectives identified above;
- actions or programs to promote the objectives;
- assignment of responsibility -- who will do the work; and
- a time line or schedule for accomplishing the work.

"Plan your work and work your plan."

6. Program Supports

In order to accomplish the action plan, you will need to identify the services, resources and strengths needed to support the planned actions. Some supports may be found easily and others may require some work. Examples of services and supports include:

- Community School funding;
- services available in the community;
- donations;
- fund-raising;
- in-kind contributions; and,
- volunteer time.

When creating your action plan, consider how you will access these resources and how they will be allocated among the various parts of the plan.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are crucial to the effectiveness of any plan. Appendix B of the *Best Practices Framework* provides detailed information about implementing a monitoring and evaluation process for your Community School plan. You may wish to create a working group that is responsible for planning and carrying out the monitoring and evaluation process. The objectives created in the planning process will provide the basis for planning the evaluation.

F. Reporting

The new Community Schools *Best Practices Framework* emphasizes the importance of accountability through an ongoing process of planning, evaluation and reporting. A Community Schools Reporting Package has been developed to assist you in completing your reporting tasks. This section will answer some of your questions about the purpose of and process for reporting.

How will the information be used?

The information provided in reports will be used in several ways:

- to assess the effectiveness of the new policy and program;
- to improve community schools;
- to support future program expansion; and,
- to provide information for a longitudinal research study into Community School effectiveness.

Who is responsible for completing the forms?

Each Community School is responsible for completing the forms. A process where the principal, Community School coordinator and others work together will provide the most complete and accurate information.

Where will the forms be sent?

Please send the completed forms to Saskatchewan Education:

Planning and Community Education,
Saskatchewan Education,
2220 College Avenue - 2nd Floor
Regina SK S4P 3V7

Attention: Community Education Consultant

At the time that you submit the reporting forms to the department be sure to send a copy to the contact person for community schools at the board of education level.

When are the forms due?

Timelines for the receipt of the various components of the Reporting Package are:

- Monthly Attendance Form - the 10th of the following month
- Community Description - December 15th
- Community School Plan - January 31st
- Community Schools Annual Report - June 30th.

G. Supports

Saskatchewan Education

Saskatchewan Education provides overall coordination, consultation and program support to the Community School Program. For information or assistance contact:

Community Education Manager
Planning and Community Education Unit
Saskatchewan Education
2220 College Avenue
Regina SK S4P 3V7
Telephone: (306) 787-9448

In addition, Saskatchewan Education and other departments produce a range of information materials which may be helpful to you. Resources that may be helpful to you include:

- *Building Communities of Hope: Best Practices for Meeting the Learning Needs of At-Risk and Indian and Métis Students, Community Schools Policy and Conceptual Framework*;
- *Working Together to Address Barriers to Learning: Integrated School-Linked Services for Children and Youth At Risk, Policy Framework*;
- *Working Together to Address Barriers to Learning: Integrated School-Linked Services for Children and Youth At Risk, Implementation Guide*;
- *Working Together, a video about Integrated School-Linked Services*;
- *Saskatchewan Human Services: Working Together*;
- *Saskatchewan School-Based Program Evaluation Resource Book*;
- *Sharing Information to Improve Services for Children, Youth and Families* (available April, 1997);
- *Interagency Projects: An Evaluation Guide* (available, March, 1997);
- *Community Development* (available, 1997); and
- *Case Management* (available, 1997).

For copies or information on the availability of any of these resources call (306) 787-3938.

Boards of Education

Boards of education provide assistance and consultation to Community Schools. Each board of education has a contact person on staff to assist with Community Schools. These contacts are listed in the Community Schools Directory. Or you can contact your Director of Education to determine the name of that contact person.

Appendices

Appendix A: Community Schools: A Summary

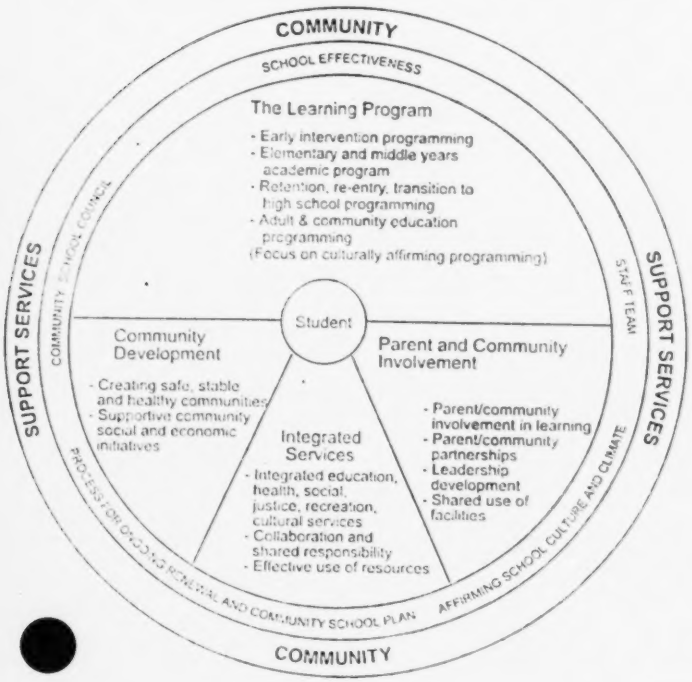
Appendix B: Sample Agenda, Minutes and Meeting Evaluation

Appendix C: Suggested Code of Ethics

Appendix D: References

Appendix A: Community Schools: A Summary – Handout

For a complete description of the elements of a Community School, please refer to the *Best Practices Framework*.


COMMUNITY
SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS
The Learning Program
- Early intervention programming
- Elementary and middle years academic program
- Retention, re-entry, transition to high school programming
- Adult & community education programming
(Focus on culturally affirming programming)
SUPPORT SERVICES
COMMUNITY SCHOOL COUNCIL
STAFF TEAM
SUPPORT SERVICES
Student
Community Development
- Creating safe, stable and healthy communities
- Supportive community social and economic initiatives
Parent and Community Involvement
- Parent/community involvement in learning
- Parent/community partnerships
- Leadership development
- Shared use of facilities
Integrated Services
- Integrated education, health, social, justice, recreation, cultural services
- Collaboration and shared responsibility
- Effective use of resources
PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING RENEWAL AND COMMUNITY SCHOOL PLAN
AFFIRMING SCHOOL CULTURE AND CLIMATE
COMMUNITY

Why Community Schools?

Saskatchewan educators face major challenges as they work to meet the learning needs of an increasing number of at risk and Indian and Métis students in their schools. Growing rates of family poverty, increasing family and community instability, and changing family structures are having a profound impact on the needs of students and on the expectations placed on teachers and other school staff. Schools are being asked to carry out many roles in the lives of children that were previously the responsibility of the family or the community.

Community Schools provide a framework of best practices where boards of education, educators, parents, community members, and human service agencies work together to improve children's opportunities for success in school and in life.

The Student

The student is the heart of the school and the centre of all activity. All parts of the Community School program focus on and respond to the needs of the students.

Community School Program Components

The Community School Framework incorporates a number of best practices that have proven to be highly effective in the education of at risk and Indian and Métis students. Taken together, the elements of the program provide a holistic, preventative, caring and empowering educational environment. Community Schools draw on a broad range of human and material resources from the surrounding community to support learning and to improve the lives of children and their families.

The Saskatchewan Community School Program has four key components:

- the learning program;
- parent and community involvement;
- integrated services; and,
- community development.

The Learning Program

The learning program is based on the provincial curriculum. In addition, it offers a full range of educational supports aimed at increasing students' chances for academic and life success. It reflects the experience, culture and socio-economic background of students. The learning program includes:

- early intervention programming for three- and four-year-olds.

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- elementary and middle years academic program. The Adaptive Dimension within Core Curriculum allows teachers to adapt curriculum content and the way that curriculum is delivered so that it is appropriate for their students.

- retention, re-entry and transition to high school programming. Community schools incorporate a range of supports to keep students in school and to bring dropouts back to school. Typical programs include flexible programs for adolescent mothers, re-entry classrooms and tutorials for students who have been out of school for some time, and programs to orient Grade 8 or 9 students to high school.

- adult and community education programming. Examples of this type of programming might include Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language, family literacy, parenting skills, Indian languages, cultural and recreational programming, and life skills.

Parent and Community Involvement

A Community School has strong ties with parents and the community. Some ways that these ties are expressed include:

- Creating a warm and welcoming climate in the school so that parents feel at home there. This may include creating a parents' room, inviting parents to regular brown bag lunches or coffee hours and holding events such as family potluck suppers and video nights.

- Involving community in planning and implementing school activities and programs, setting school goals, identifying issues and priorities, locating resources, setting school policy, and solving problems.

- Encouraging community members to participate in the learning program as tutors for children who need extra help, mentors or teachers of special subjects such as photography, computer skills, music, art, etc.

- Involving Elders and others with knowledge of Indian and Métis cultural traditions in the school program.

- Using the community as a site for learning through field trips and through individual assignments that require use of community resources.

- Use of school facilities by community members for activities such as community meetings and events, community counselling and adult education programs, and daycare. The school may also provide office space for other professionals who work with children such as social workers from Saskatchewan Social Services, and youth workers employed by local Indian and Métis organizations.

Integrated Services

Children who are at risk often need services and supports from several different agencies. They might need health care, counselling, justice and recreation services for example. Integrated services means that the school works collaboratively with the agencies providing these services to ensure that children and families get the supports they need and that no children fall through the cracks. Integrated services also means that many of the services needed by at risk children are offered at school either by visiting professionals or by staff of other agencies who have offices in the school.

Community Development

Community development is a process through which people take responsibility for improving the quality of life in their communities. This activity is critical in Community Schools, because children and young people cannot succeed in school and in life if the community to which they return at the end of each school day is unstable or harmful. The difficulties children experience at home or in the community have a direct impact on their ability to learn in school.

Some issues around which a school might undertake community development activities include:

- safety and security for children in their community;
- improved housing;
- anti-racism initiatives;
- community justice and crime prevention;
- homelessness and street kids;
- improved facilities for child care;
- support and counselling services for victims of substance abuse or domestic violence; and,
- creating employment opportunities.

Community School Staff

A principal with a strong commitment to both school and community provides leadership in the Community School. Teachers are knowledgeable of the needs and realities of Indian and Métis and at risk children.

In addition, Community Schools have the following specialized staff:

- **Community School Coordinator** – a professional community development worker who provides leadership in integrated services, community development, and parent and community involvement within the school.

- **Teacher Associates** – People of Indian and Métis ancestry from the community in which the school is located who:

  - provide role models for students;
  - support teachers in the classroom, work with individual students and assist with teaching; and,
  - serve as links between parents and the school.

- **The Nutrition Coordinator** – a person with knowledge of cooking and nutrition who coordinates or prepares healthy food for students and who conducts nutrition classes for students, parents and community members.

School Effectiveness

The concept of school effectiveness guides all aspects of school operation. The Community School Council and the Community School Plan are central to school effectiveness and also serve to tie all other program components together.

The Community School Council

Everyone with a student in a Community School is a member of the Community School Council. So are the members of the community groups, Indian and Métis organizations, and human service agencies that work with the school. All of these people have the right to attend meetings and to participate. The objective is to get as much parent and community involvement and support as possible. Each Council has an Executive that handles administrative matters and implements the decisions of the entire Council.

The Executive of the Community School Council includes representation from:

- parents;
- students;
- teachers;
- teacher associates;
- human service agencies within or linked to the school, and the community;

as well as:

- the principal; and,
- the community school coordinator.

The Council leads development and implementation of the Community School Plan. It oversees, initiates, coordinates and evaluates the Community School Program according to the plan. It may also provide advice to principal, school staff and board of education regarding such matters as staffing, budget and relationship with the community.

The Community School Plan

The Community School Plan is an outline of what the school intends to do during the next year. It includes:

- a statement of the vision for the Community School;
- a needs assessment;
- achievable objectives for the next year for each of the four program components: the learning program, parent and community involvement, integrated services and community development;
- action plans to implement the objectives in each of the four areas;
- identification of in-kind contributions, program supports, volunteer time and donations that will come from the community to support the action plan; and,
- a monitoring and evaluation process.

Appendix B: Sample Agenda, Minutes and Meeting Evaluation

If these are useful, they can be modified to reflect the needs of your Community School Council.

Sample Agenda

7:30 pm	Call to Order	Chairperson
7:31	Review Agenda: Changes, Additions, Deletions	Chairperson
7:35	Minutes of Previous Meeting: -approval -items for discussion from meeting	Chairperson
7:45	Information Items: -correspondence	Recorder
7:55	Reports:	
	-Communication Committee	Jim
	-Fund Raising Committee	Jane
	-Parent Volunteer Committee	Faye, George
	-Principal's Report	Bill
	-School Division Report	Ken
8:30	Unfinished Business: (issues not resolved at previous meetings)	
	-Volunteer recognition plans	George
	-Equipment wish list	Bill
8:45	New Business: (new issues)	
	-Provincial meeting of School Councils	Barb
	-Workshops for parents	Janice
	-Discipline Policy - 2nd Draft	Bill
	-Issues and Concerns:	Chairperson
	-	
	-	
9:25	Next Meeting: Date, Time, Location	Chairperson
9:30	Adjournment	Chairperson

Sample Meeting Minutes

Main Street School Council
September 11, 1997 Meeting
School Library
Minutes

Present:

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:35 by Jane __, Chairperson.

Adoption of the Agenda: The agenda was adopted with the additions of:
3.4 ____

Minutes: The minutes of the June 7, 1997 meeting were read and approved.
Jones/Smith CARRIED

Business Arising: Use of the School during the summer:

David reported that two organizations used the school during the summer for basketball (July 3 - 7), and the Kids Sport Camp (July 10 - 21).

Correspondence: Helen read three items of correspondence:

1. School Division Meetings
2. Social Services Youth Conference
3. Scouts/Guides Registration

Reports: Communications Committee:

Jack provided an update on the communication plans for the fall and winter. The newsletter will be distributed on Friday, September 18, and local businesses have agreed to post meeting notices.

Fund Raising Committee:

Susan reported that the committee will be meeting next week to review the teacher's list of equipment and look at possible projects. Anyone with suggestions should contact Susan or the Bill.

Principal's Report:

Bill gave the registration report. The teachers have suggested that the discipline policy needs to be updated. Ken and Jack volunteered to sit on a Discipline Policy Committee.

..... 2

Old Business	No old business.
New Business	1. Provincial Meeting of School Councils: The Meeting will be held Oct 13. Jane and Susan volunteered to attend the meeting. MOTION: THAT THE MAIN STREET SCHOOL COUNCIL PAY THE TRAVEL AND MEAL EXPENSES OF JANE _ AND SUSAN _ TO ATTEND THE OCTOBER 13 MEETING OF SCHOOL COUNCILS. SMITH/JONES CARRIED 2. Workshops for Parents: Jack distributed a proposed list of workshops for parents. Dates and facilitators are to be finalized by September 18. Members suggested that posters and notices be developed for each workshop.
Next Meeting	The next meeting will be held October 9, at 7:30 in the School Library.
Adjournment	The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 pm. Smith. CARRIED

SAMPLE MEETING MINUTES FORM				
TOPIC	DISCUSSION	DECISION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE

SAMPLE MEETING EVALUATION FORM

Please take the time to complete this evaluation form. Your input will assist us in improving future meetings. Date:_____

1. Publicity: How did you find out about this meeting?

   __Poster __School Notice __Newsletter __Word of Mouth
   __Personal Invitation __Other _____

2. Agenda: Was the agenda clear? __yes __no
   Comments:

3. Participation: Were you able to contribute as much as you wanted? __yes __no
   Comments:

4. Decision Making: Were the council's decisions:
   clear? __yes __no
   adequately discussed? __yes __no
   reflective of membership input? __yes __no

   Comments:

5. Length of Meeting: Was the length of meeting __adequate __too long __too short
   Comments:

6. Date, location and time: Do you have any comments about the date, location and time of the meeting?

7. Room Set-up: Was the room set up to allow for comfort and participation? __yes __no
   Comments:

8. What did you like about the meeting?

9. What could be improved?

Appendix C: Suggested Code of Ethics

As a member of the Community School Council and/or as a volunteer, I shall:

- be guided by the policy, vision, goals and principles of the Community School program;
- know and work toward the vision for _____ Community School;
- endeavour to be familiar with school policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them;
- practise the highest standards of honesty, accuracy, integrity and truth;
- encourage a positive atmosphere where individual contributions are encouraged and valued;
- recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community;
- apply democratic principles;
- consider the best interests of all students;
- respect and maintain the confidentiality of student information;
- limit discussions at school council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole;
- use the appropriate communication channels when questions or concerns arise;
- promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community;
- accept accountability for decisions of the Community School Council; and,
- declare any conflict of interest.

(Adapted from Alberta Education et al, 1995)

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